LACOSTE ON TENNIS

Harold Corbett Smith

Piedmont
College Library

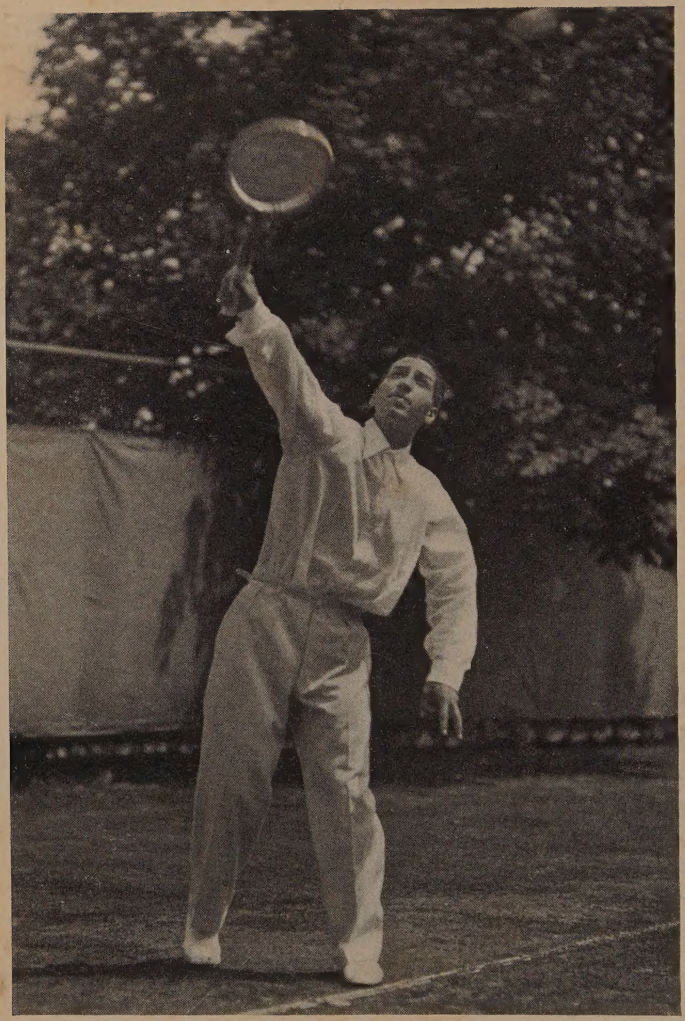
DEMOREST, GEORGIA

28956

GV 995 .L23 Lacoste, Jean René.
Lacoste on tennis

796.34 L11

LACOSTE ON TENNIS



Underwood and Underwood

RENÉ LACOSTE, INTERNATIONAL CHAMPION

LACOSTE ON TENNIS

With an Introduction by
WILLIAM T. TILDEN, 2ND

by
JEAN RENÉ LACOSTE

Containing the Official Rules of the United States Lawn Tennis Association

WILLIAM MORROW & COMPANY : NEW YORK

796.54
L119

COPYRIGHT, 1928, BY
WILLIAM MORROW & COMPANY, INC.

Lennis

PRINTED IN THE U. S. A. BY
QUINN & BODEN COMPANY, INC.
RAHWAY, N. J.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
	Introduction	ix
I	Lots of Luck	1
II	The Beginner	12
III	Ancient and Modern	22
IV	Technique	32
V	Service	44
VI	The Forehand Stroke	55
VII	Backhand	67
VIII	Volleys	78
IX	Lob and Smash	87
X	Position on the Court	98
XI	Choice of Tactics	109
XII	Service and Return	121
XIII	Net Play	132
XIV	Spin of the Ball	144
XV	Match	153
XVI	Temperament	165
XVII	Championships	178
XVIII	Doubles	190
XIX	Suzanne Lenglen	203
XX	Tilden	216
XXI	The Davis Cup	226
	Rules of Lawn Tennis	239

ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
René Lacoste, International Champion	*Frontispiece*
Forehand Stroke (Cochet)	4
The End of a Forehand (Johnston)	8
Forehand Half-Volley (Richards)	18
Beginning of a Service (Lacoste)	26
Helen Wills	30
Tilden's Service	46
Patterson's Service	52
Tilden's Forehand Stroke	56
Johnston's Famous Forehand Drive	62
Richards' Backhand Volley	66
Lacoste's Peculiar Backhand Stroke	74
Tilden's Backhand Stroke	78
High Backhand Volley (Borotra)	80
Backhand Low Volley (Lacoste)	92
A Beautiful Smash (Cochet)	96
Richards' Smash	108
Backhand Volley (Boussus)	110
Vincent Richards Serving	126
Johnston's Forehand Volley	134

ILLUSTRATIONS

FACING PAGE

Forehand Volley (Borotra) 142

Anderson's Forehand Drive 158

Racquet Grips (First Series) 162

Racquet Grips (Second Series) 170

Beginning of a Forehand Stroke (Lacoste) . 178

Wimbledon Center Court 186

A Great Team: Brugnon-Cochet 190

The Davis Cup Doubles (Germantown Cricket Club) 206

End of a Backhand Stroke (Lenglen) . . 210

Backhand Stroke (Tilden) 218

The French Davis Cup Team 224

The Davis Cup 236

The Davis Cup Leaving New York . . . 236

INTRODUCTION

JEAN RENÉ LACOSTE, Champion of the World, writes on tennis.

For years I have heard the old saying that champions are born and not made. I have been told champions are accidents, freaks, but never consciously developed. My own career was used to prove that a champion was an accident—and often a bad one. My personal opinion that champions (and certainly myself) were the result of long, hard work was ignored and flouted. Then came René Lacoste, a hand-made, personally produced champion, a champion not by the grace of God alone, but by the earnest, sincere and long-suffering effort of himself.

René Lacoste is the son of a prominent, influential and wealthy automobile magnate. His father, who had views for René that led along business lines rather than sport, listened to young René plead to play tennis and while René was yet in his teens agreed to allow him to play tennis on the one condition that his son do it better than any one else. Lacoste, senior, knew his work thoroughly. He expected his son to know his

play just as thoroughly. René asked for five years to show his worth. Five years later he was undisputed champion of the world.

René Lacoste was not a natural tennis player as a child and in no way can be called one to-day. His game is the result of long hours not only of practice but of careful study of the theory of the game. One sees no such genius of natural production, such flights of inspired tennis, as one sees in Henri Cochet, or recalls in Vincent Richards. Lacoste has no one shot that is just a gift of the gods like Richards' volley, Johnston's drive, or Patterson's overhead; but at the same time one sees no weakness in Lacoste's game, no hole that can be pounded.

I first saw Lacoste in his initial United States appearance, with the French Davis Cup team in 1923 at Longwood Club, Boston. He was then a slight, dark, retiring youngster of about nineteen. His game was a sound, reliable baseline game of no great strength but with a foundation so solid that any one who knew tennis could recognize he would go far in his game. It was at that time that I heard of the famous Lacoste tennis note-book. Young René, even then, was keeping a card index of the players he met, noting their strength and their weakness and also

the correct method of playing them. Year by year this has grown until to-day Lacoste knows more about how to play the leading tennis stars of the world than any one living. Every day during the season, Lacoste practices for hours. Much credit for his phenomenal rise during the past five years must go to Darsenval, the famous professional of the Stade Français at St. Cloud. Lacoste has worked with him for years. Until three years ago Lacoste worked solely for steady defense, to get the ball back at any cost. The last three years he has been adding to the speed of his shots, has been mixing in a net attack with his defense, and it was his added attack plus his defense that has carried him to the very top.

Lacoste set out to solve my game following our first meeting. How successfully he did so is clearly shown when in 1927 against as good tennis as I ever played he defeated me in Paris for the French championship, at Germantown in the Davis Cup and at Forest Hills for the United States Championship.

Many people watching Lacoste on a tennis court think of him as drab, uninteresting and almost morose, so restrained and unemotional is his style. He seems just a machine. In the perfection of his stroking he is a machine but he himself

is far more than that. Jean René Lacoste is a charming, cultured gentleman, a boy of high ideals, of discriminating taste, of intellectual brilliancy, a student, and in some ways an artist. He is one of the most modest winners and graceful losers in tennis. He is a sportsman to his finger tips and a man who is a great credit to France. I consider it one of the real privileges of my tennis career that I have met, played and lost to Lacoste and count him among my friends.

Lacoste has written of tennis! What should this mean to young players? It seems to me a great chance for his readers to grasp the lessons of his tennis career at first hand. This student tells in understandable language how and why his shots are made. It needs no technical knowledge of tennis to understand Lacoste's book, just common sense. He may not advance expert theory far, as might Cochet, but he will do much to build a sound foundation for any one who follows his instruction. He writes well, easily, always interestingly, and modestly. Yet, in my opinion the greatest benefit of Lacoste's book, particularly to the young star who is striving to advance, is the inspiration of Lacoste himself. If he could rise to the top of the heap in five years, with no special genius to work on, using

determination, courage and intelligence to aid him in utilizing the strokes as he mastered them and then having once done it, set it all forth in this book, it seems to me any youngster would do well to read the book and start out along the same road. I urge young America to hear what young France has to say and to profit by it.

France, which Lacoste so worthily represents, stands to-day the champion tennis nation of the world. Lacoste with Henri Cochet, Jean Borotra and Jacques Brugnon—the four musketeers, hold between them for the year 1928, the Davis Cup, the French, English, Australian and United States Championships. They have swept clear the tennis courts of the world. Their hold is as clean and the record greater than that of any year when Billy Johnston and I held sway for the United States. In winning this great series of victories, the four musketeers not only won honors on the court but won hosts of friends for themselves and for France through the manner and sporting spirit of their play. The break in the reign of the United States, and the crowning of France as Tennis King is a healthy thing for the sport all over the world. Already the stimulus is rousing all of Europe to renewed tennis activity. In 1928, thirty-two nations of the

world played for the Davis Cup. The cry of the tennis world is youth, and France has youth with her four musketeers but they are not relying solely on them. Already Christian Boussus has been sent to Australia for training, while Cochet has teamed with young de Buzelet in doubles in 1928 to aid his development. René Lacoste, himself still under twenty-five, is leading the work of developing the youngsters of France. He is always urging the French Tennis Association to develop its juniors and is himself ready always to play with any promising boy. Much of the spirit of France is in Lacoste's book and much of his own courageous spirit. I find the book an inspiration to me, "an aged net star"; how much greater inspiration it should prove to a rising player.

Ah, René, my most sincere congratulations on your personal success on the courts and may I express my great enjoyment of your book and the pleasure it has given me to write this introduction. May you play many years of tennis and with the greatest success. France, the United States—all the tennis world needs you.

Hail Jean René Lacoste! Champion of the World.

William T. Tilden, 2nd.

June, 1928.

LACOSTE ON TENNIS

CHAPTER I

LOTS OF LUCK

When I was a child my sister used often to talk in my presence about this or that game of tennis in which she had taken part, mentioning the names of her partners. Sometimes she entrusted me with her racquet to play with for a little while at the bottom of our garden against a wall of red brick. But she never allowed me to accompany her when she left our villa to go to the little club where she was in the habit of playing.

Tennis had for me first of all the attraction of the unknown pleasure, the forbidden pleasure, the distraction reserved for grown-ups, the premature enjoyment of which is not permitted. It was in 1919 that I saw a tennis court for the first time. I was then thirteen years old, and my father decided to send me during my holidays to England to enable me to improve an abominable English accent. At my request he was good enough to buy me a tennis racquet, in the belief that a tennis court in England was a marvelous

place for learning the English language, since in France itself when playing tennis one is obliged to pronounce a word of English from time to time. But there is hardly any talking to be done when tennis is played in earnest. And I played from morning until evening, begging the club groundsman to allow me to play when night commenced to fall and even when the moment had arrived for him to subject the grass of the courts to a lengthy watering, in accordance with those rites which have given England the possession of the finest lawns in the world.

Every morning I scaled the walls to play with a chum, who, like myself, was French. This, I am afraid, in utter disregard of the English laws!

If my English scarcely improved, I nevertheless made a certain amount of progress in the art of handling a racquet. Urged on by the greatest ambitions, I did not hesitate to enter for the local championship. I was beaten 6-1, 6-0 on the first round, and the very next day I returned to France, entirely disillusioned, disgusted with tennis forever!

Eight days later I bought a new racquet, having come to the conclusion in the meantime that my first racquet, either because it was too light or too heavy, had been the sole obstacle to vic-

tory! And I started once more to play tennis from morning until evening, taking advantage of the last days of my holidays before getting back to my studies in October. I asked my father to have me registered as a member of the Stade Français, the Sporting Club de Paris and the Racing Club de France. All the spare time which my studies left me I devoted to the game of tennis. Every Thursday I took a lesson from Henri Darsonval, the wonderful French professor.

I was then a pale and thin boy, of average height, rather weakly and delicate in health. In order to play tennis better I took lessons from a professor of physical culture, and gradually, slowly but surely, I acquired robust health, with stronger muscles. On the court I set myself to imitate the strokes of Brugnon, Dupont or Germot, whom I often saw playing at the Sporting Club. Sometimes, to encourage me, they made me play a little game. I tried to understand the way in which they executed each stroke, endeavored to distinguish, beneath the polish of style and ease of action, the correct and effective stroke from the brilliant, incorrect or useless one. Tucked away in a drawer I keep a number of little notebooks, the pages of which are covered

with notes. The earlier ones go back to this period. My chums often tease me about my tennis notebooks, especially since an American journalist last summer offered me one thousand dollars in exchange for my most recent notebook! I did not part with it and my chums can go on talking, because each notebook is worth a good deal more to me: it helps me—and that is a priceless consideration—to retain an ever fresh record of the lessons carefully noted down on the occasion of each of my defeats.

To tennis I have sacrificed many things—often more convenient pleasures, sometimes more important studies. My father, a one-time champion oarsman, always a convinced sportsman, understood and encouraged what had become with me a veritable passion. He always left me imprudently free to fix the time which it was reasonable to devote to sport! I passed all my holidays on the courts. During the summer of 1920 I went to play at Mont Dore and at La Bourboule. In 1921 I took part without great success in several inter-school championships, and then played some tournaments at Dinard. I was beaten 6-1, 6-0 by Antoine Gentien, who is today an excellent player and my best friend. I

Wide World

FOREHAND STROKE (COCHET)

felt wild with him, however, when my father asked me how old he was and I had to confess that he was a year younger than I was. "Don't you think," said my father, "that it would be wise to abandon a sport for which it seems evident that you have scarcely any aptitude?"

One month later I begged my father to let me play a little longer: I had played against the aforesaid Gentien in the final of the France Junior Championship and only lost 6-4, 7-5. Two months later I beat him at the Tennis Championship of Paris and shortly after won the France Junior Championship on covered courts.

These few successes urged me to persevere, being encouraged by some but discouraged by others, whom I heard say that I should never be of much account.

It was in 1922 that I played my first international match. On the eve of passing my *baccalaureat* I obtained permission from my father to take part in the World Championships at Brussels. I had the luck to beat Roper Barrett, who had scarcely left the boat which brought him to Belgium, and then de Poncheville, an excellent player from Lille. I had, moreover, the particular luck of meeting in Mishu an adversary of

such tough calibre that I was eliminated from the tournament in time to return to Paris to pass my examination!

In the course of the summer which followed, and on the advice of Suzanne Lenglen, I gave up holding my racquet in the middle of the handle. Beaten by Le Besnerais at Dieppe, by Roger Danet at Deauville, I played much better a month later and won, meeting Marcel Dupont, and having my revenge on Roger Danet at the Havre Tournament.

A few days afterwards, at Etretot, I learned from Hirsch that I did not yet know how to defend myself against a good volley player, and in the course of the Porée Cup, Aslangul's demonstration was so effective that I never forgot the lesson that a game is never won before the last ball is played. Leading 6-0 and 5-1, 40-15, I could not produce the winning shot and finally lost. At the beginning of the season, on covered courts, I set myself to cultivate my volley in order to impart to my play the sting which it lacked.

In the month of January, 1923, I took a set from Borotra. In the "Championships of the World," at Barcelona, I played well against Manolo Alonso and beat Flaquer for the final of the consolation contest. Some days later I met,

in the first round of the Championship of France, a somewhat sleepy Borotra at ten o'clock in the morning, after a very short night. Cochet, who had the *grippe,* lost against Hirsch. In the final, though dominated at the beginning, I recovered against an adversary as excited as I was, and showing it more, at the thought of gaining the Championship of France for the first time. I eventually won in four sets.

In the International Tournament at St. Cloud in 1923 I was beaten in the semi-final, but was consoled by being chosen to represent France in the Davis Cup matches. I played my first match and lost it against Larsen the Dane. I won a double at Dublin. At Deauville I won my first notable victory over de Gomar.

Eight days later, brimful of hope, I left for America with Brugnon and Hirsch.

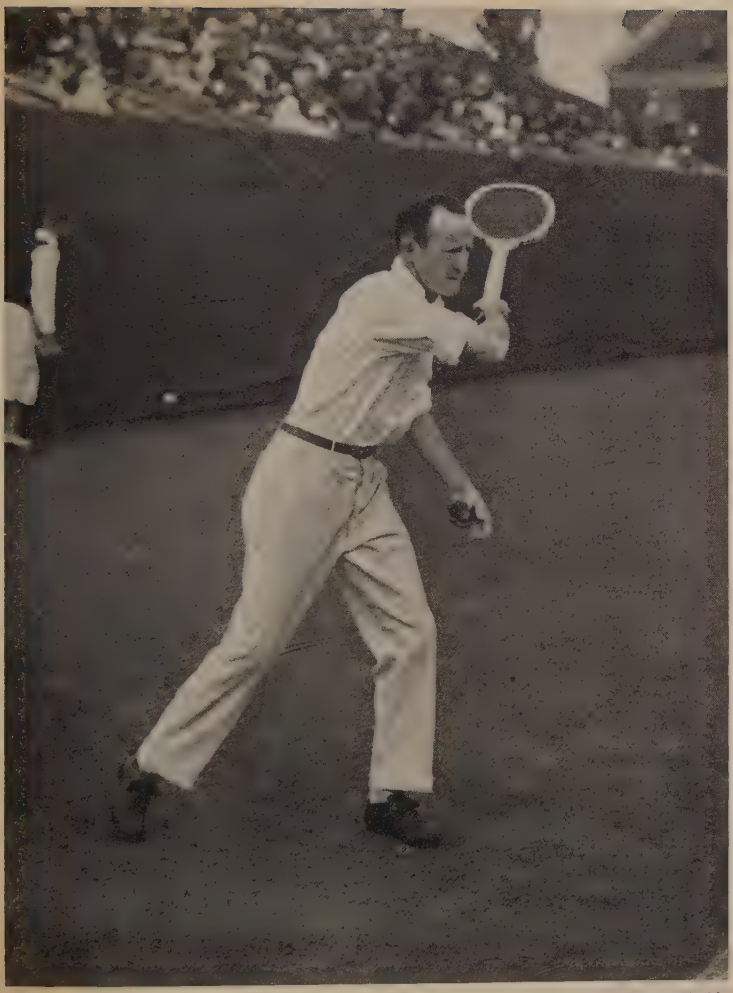
It took four years for fortune to smile on the French team. On the 8th of September, 1927, my dream was realized and the Davis Cup experienced the charm of the country of France. The period of waiting for this success seemed very long, but the pleasure was after all the more profound.

Since the day when I held a tennis racquet for the first time, I have enjoyed the most mar-

velous luck on all courts. I was often beaten, but looking back over the ground covered I now ask myself if each of the defeats which fortune did not spare me was not inflicted at the very moment when it was necessary. Perhaps a good fairy thus simply warned me that it was still necessary to put in a good deal of work to avoid later on a more grueling defeat from which her good offices could not have saved me. If Gentien had not beaten me 6-1, 6-0, I should not have become his equal in three months. At the beginning of each of the stages that chance has permitted me to cover, I find a defeat and the names of Aslangul, Borotra, Cochet, Johnston and Tilden.

If Lott had not beaten me easily at Southampton (U.S.A.) last summer, I should not have so clearly realized the necessity of subjecting myself without delay to the severest physical training which one can undergo, but which enabled me, one month later, to assist my comrades in winning the Davis Cup.

Victory is also a stimulant. In winning my first Championship of France, I met an exacting mistress who has asked much of me, but greatly helped me—the ambition always to play better, to represent my country well. It is necessary—and here we have the magnificent ex-



Wide World

THE END OF A FOREHAND (JOHNSTON)

ample given on the courts by a Borotra or a Tilden—to know how to extract equal profit from success and defeat, in order to create an ever increasing will to succeed. The will, in tennis, as in everything else, constitutes the best and the least costly insurance against failure: to play well at tennis, certain natural qualities are required, to become a great champion the will to utilize these qualities is an essential factor. Tilden on a tennis court wins because he knows how to use his height to advantage, his agility and also his intelligence, Borotra because he is wonderfully fast, Cochet because his reflex movements are admirable. I have not the genius of a Tilden, or the physical qualities of a Borotra or of a Cochet. If I have sometimes succeeded in beating them it is because I have willed with all my force to win, to utilize the means which were within my reach, namely, a meticulous preparation.

I do not understand how Cochet and Brugnon on the court so readily find the best reply to any particular attack, but, by studying the play of my adversaries for a long time in advance, I sometimes succeed in producing the strokes to beat them.

Towards the attainment of victory I have two

aids which are open to one and all, a very complete collection of books on tennis—the pages of which have become loose by dint of use—and a cement wall, which is reconstructed every year because I wear it out by dint of driving against it the balls which it untiringly returns to me!

I have had the good fortune to find in tennis centers incomparable comrades and directors who made my training agreeable and my match-playing easy. If it were only for the fact that I had made the acquaintance of such dear friends and comrades as Gentien, Brugnon, Borotra, Cochet, Washer, Williams, Kingscote, F. M. B. Fisher, Austin, Tilden, Alonso, and many others, tennis would have earned all my gratitude. I have sacrificed a great deal for sport, but it has repaid my sacrifice a hundredfold. For the purpose of playing tennis I have made some splendid journeys, which have given me a better knowledge of the world and have enabled me to acquire a little experience. By land and by sea I have covered thousands and thousands of miles; Paris, Bordeaux, Lyons, the Riviera, Normandy, Belgium, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, Germany, England, Ireland, Austria, Hungary, Czecho-Slovakia, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, the United States, and Canada pass before my closed eyes in a mar-

velous film. Dear friends and pleasant memories live for me everywhere. Tennis has given me all that and much more—the simple but profound pleasure which one experiences on a tennis court at any age, under any conditions, anywhere, when the game is played for the mere love of the sport.

CHAPTER II

THE BEGINNER

TENNIS as played by a Borotra or a Suzanne Lenglen is an athletic sport which requires as much endurance as a game of football, and causes as much violent effort as a hundred yards sprint, or a rowing race. But tennis is also a game, a distraction for all those who seek relaxation in sports. At all ages—when young, between class hours; later on, between two business appointments—it is possible to find on a tennis court that physical exercise, taken in the quantity desired, which affords wonderful rest for the brain.

In all its forms tennis procures the same satisfaction for those who give themselves up to it whole-heartedly, and endeavor within the measure of their means to improve themselves, to play better. On a tennis court as in life in general, in every sphere of activity, the anxiety to improve oneself is the surest guarantee of success and of happiness.

If you possess, over and above the desire to

amuse yourself, the ambition to become a good player, the hope more or less confessed of becoming a champion one day, you must not commence to play tennis too late, when the training of the reflex movements is difficult to effect. Under the age of ten, a child, on a court, contracts bad habits. At twelve or thirteen years of age it is time to commence playing tennis. I commenced playing when I was fifteen years old. I should not have been a better player, perhaps, if I had commenced earlier, but I should certainly have had more easy movements on a court to-day.

In order to progress rapidly, you must devote a great deal of time to tennis. Almost necessarily you will have to neglect all the other sports. Less because it is impossible to assimilate the technique of tennis and that of golf or of rowing, for example, at the same time, than because you will have less energy and less leisure for studying tennis.

Hard work *only* makes a good tennis player. Often when playing I have felt exhausted, but I was able, owing to constant physical training, to surmount my fatigue and play on, becoming a stronger and better player.

When equipping yourself, do not have the least hesitation. Buy the best possible racquet.

Choose a strong, well-stretched racquet, not too light nor too heavy, and of good make. Renew your supply of balls as often as possible. Become a member of a club where you will be sure of finding good partners and where you can see very good players at the game. If you commence under good conditions, tennis will always seem a pleasant and easy game. A bad beginning, on the contrary, paralyzes the best of intentions.

As soon as possible learn to hold your racquet well. Place your hand right at the end of the handle. Contract the muscles of your arm during the entire execution of your stroke. If your wrist remains supple each time that you do not strike the ball with the center of your racquet, and that happens often, you will miss your stroke completely. Choose a "grip" for striking the ball on the forehand stroke and, by turning the handle of the racquet in your hand to the extent of about a quarter of a turn, a "grip" for playing the backhand stroke. Do not strike the ball on the forehand stroke and on the backhand stroke with the same side of the racquet, as many players do. Do not try to hold your racquet in the same way for the execution of every stroke. But content yourself at the beginning with two

different "grips." You will be able to serve and smash perfectly, to execute a backhand volley with the grip that you have chosen for the backhand stroke at the back of the court, and execute a forehand volley with your forehand stroke grip. Do not try to copy exactly the grips of your professor or of the best player that you know. Try merely to choose two racquet grips which will enable you later on, without too much changing, to find the grips which will permit you to obtain the best results.

Above all, learn to place yourself in the correct position on the court for serving, when waiting for the service of your adversary, and in the middle of an exchange. Between two strokes keep your racquet against your chest, supporting it with the left hand. Always be ready to execute any stroke. Accustom yourself to remaining always well behind the back line or to advancing quite close to the net. Always return to the middle of the court.

On a court a player should always be on his toes. During the execution of a stroke one should never face the net.

To execute service, smash, forehand stroke, and forehand volley, place your left foot in front of your right foot. To execute a backhand stroke

or a backhand volley, place your right foot ahead. If you do not place your feet correctly your strokes will always lack ease, precision and pace. Each stroke in tennis is the result of coördinated work between all the muscles of the body. These muscles do not all work harmoniously unless the balance of the body is well controlled, unless the feet are correctly placed.

Learn to watch the ball well. When a player does not strike the ball with the center of his racquet at a good distance from the shoulder, it is nine times out of ten simply because he has not followed it carefully enough with his eyes. In tennis eighty per cent. of the points that you lose will go to your adversary simply because you have not struck the ball correctly, and eighty per cent. of the errors you commit are due to your inattention, to the fact that you do not watch the ball sufficiently at the moment you make the stroke.

Do not spare your energy, but do not waste it. Try to play every stroke "economically." Do not hurry your movements; accustom yourself to preparing your return as soon as you have seen or guessed how the stroke of your adversary will be played. It is not a rapid movement which allows of imparting a lot of speed to the ball, but

a long and supple movement carefully executed, by taking all the necessary time.

You will learn a great deal in tennis by inspiring yourself with the style of the great players. However, you should never copy a champion too fully when you are only beginning. A great player does not always follow the ball with his eyes; he executes admirable strokes with his feet badly placed, and tries difficult strokes which scarcely pay, except for the impression that they create on the opponent. A champion may, and indeed should, depart, in several respects, from the classic manner, from the style which usually gives the best results. Generally speaking, the more his play expresses his personality the stronger his play is.

On the contrary, a beginner will make all the more progress the better he knows how to suppress every manifestation of his personality over a long period. A beginner should try to discover in the very various styles of the players whom he wishes to imitate what may be classical in them and only copy that literally.

For a long time one should never try to execute difficult strokes, and should endeavor to avoid playing close over the net: before knowing how to put the ball out of the reach of the op-

ponent in order to gain the point, it is necessary to know simply how to put it back in play.

A beginner should even forget, if he can, his desire to finish each rally to his advantage. He should never consciously infringe one of the essential principles of tennis in order to win a stroke.

The only point in common between the attitude of the champion and that of the beginner on a tennis court is an ever present concentration which should be as perfect as possible. It is not possible to win a match without giving your mind to it. It is not possible to make rapid progress without application. It is useless to pass hours on a court looking at what is going on round about or in conversing with a partner; not only is progress retarded, but all that is got out of tennis under these circumstances is lassitude, physically and mentally.

Apply yourself, concentrate, watch your ball, place your feet well, prepare your stroke well beforehand, do not try to succeed with the difficult strokes, and you will be astonished at the progress you will make.

Take a few lessons, but beg your professor to limit his instructions to guiding you and not to try to model your play on his own, or that of this

Henri Manuel

FOREHAND HALF-VOLLEY (RICHARDS)

or that player of whom he has made a favorable example. The same model cannot suit everybody. The principles alone remain. The rôle of the professor, which is a difficult one, should be confined to seeing that these principles are observed. Always try to keep your strokes on the same level. As is natural, first of all cultivate your forehand stroke, but very quickly learn to execute a backhand stroke. Learn to play at the back of the court before venturing up to the net, but rapidly learn to execute a volley and a smash. Cultivate your service. Whenever possible, take a few balls and work out your service, alone, on the court.

In a word, try to develop your play as harmoniously as possible. Many players of both sexes have a better stroke in their repertoire than the corresponding stroke possessed by Suzanne Lenglen or Tilden. No man, no woman, comes up to them, because Tilden and Suzanne Lenglen have no weak point. Never allow a weakness to develop in your execution. The longer you wait the more difficult it will be to correct a bad habit. Look at Patterson and Cochet. If they had endeavored, when beginning, to play the backhand stroke often, they would probably have no more trouble to-day in returning a ball di-

rected towards their left court than a ball which they can return with the forehand stroke. It is too late for them now to cultivate their backhand stroke, because the bad habit has been formed and they would have to play the backhand stroke for months and often lose in order to correct themselves.

Do not seek to impart too much spin to the ball. Place yourself in the best position for succeeding with your stroke. It does not take a long time to learn to vary a solid and well-constructed game, and, on the contrary, it is a very difficult task when the habit has been formed of imparting a lot of spin to the ball to succeed, when making a certain stroke, in striking the ball flat. And at times there is nothing more effective than a simple rapid stroke, executed by striking the ball nearly flat.

A last hint: Never become discouraged. Progress is always slow, often irregular, in tennis. A whole year's work is not noticed in the course of a constant progression, but success may come all of a sudden when hope has been lost. One must be patient and convinced that serious and conscientious work will always give the result which can be reasonably hoped for.

A marvelous thing about tennis is that the re-

ward is only in accordance with the efforts made. Arrived at a certain point the strength of a player, more than his natural qualities, represents the number of hours which he has passed on the court and the intelligence with which he has directed his training.

CHAPTER III

ANCIENT AND MODERN

THERE is often discussion around the tennis courts about the players of former days. The qualities of the old champions and those of the modern ones are weighed and compared: no sport more so than tennis lends itself to endless controversy when a Doherty and a Tilden are compared side by side. In golf the score remains, in foot-racing the time is a witness which cannot be other than impartial. In tennis, in order to compare a champion who is no more with a Cochet, it is only possible to revive an impression.

What purpose does it serve, moreover, to revive, in thought, the shadow, regretted on all the courts of Europe, of the great Wilding or to imagine who will be the champion of the world in 1930 in order to compare him with Tilden? Let us resist the vain desire of uniting in one and the same imaginary tournament the Pims and the Renshaws, the Dohertys and the Larneds, the Wildings and the Brookes, the Decugis and the

Goberts, the Tildens and the Johnstons, the Borotras and Cochets; in champions who have never met, less still than in those who have met frequently, one should never see rivals for glory, but the workmen in a common task, thanks to whom, beyond all doubt, we play better to-day than yesterday and will play better to-morrow than to-day.

Each of the champions of the past merits the same share of admiration and gratitude of all those who love tennis, because in a chain each link serves its purpose, and a better comparison of the list of their names cannot be made than by likening them to a chain of which they were each in turn the last link added to the chain, taking it still further, adding to the progress and the improvement of tennis.

Tennis was first played in England in 1872: lawn tennis was then called sphairistique (*sic*). The net was five feet high in the middle, and near the poles, which supported it, the height was seven feet. The ball was struck quite at the end of its rebound, always with the forehand stroke, upwards.

Little by little the height of the net was reduced. The dimensions of the court and the rules of the game became more settled and were fixed.

In order to speed up the game, the ball was taken sooner on the bound. Then was started the backhand stroke, and players imagined service, by striking the ball as high as possible above the head.

Tennis was first played on turf courts, then on clay courts, on cement courts, and even in covered halls, on wooden floors, covered or not by canvas. First of all uncovered balls of uncertain bound were used, and racquets of strange and varying shapes. Little by little balls covered with cloth, rebounding very high, were alone regularly used, and experience fixed with precision the length, weight and form of the racquet.

Players commenced to volley from time to time, and then came audacious individuals who, as soon as their service or their return was accomplished, claimed never to let a ball rebound. Others never advanced close to the net. One after the other, for years past, in an ever similar rhythm, baseline players and forecourt players take an advantage which appears decisive to their contemporaries but which no longer seems, as and when they are replaced by new players, anything but the result of their personal qualities, more or less brilliant.

For many years, surroundings of a tennis

match have changed but little, unless it be a crowd, ever increasing, pressing round the courts. But a match between Cochet and Johnston, Borotra and Tilden, only distantly recalls the first game of tennis or even those played ten years before the war between a Larned and a Doherty. Formerly tennis was a sport in which it was desired to preserve the elegance of not appearing to produce any violent effort. Finesse and precision were the qualities by which a real champion was recognized.

Twenty years ago almost all the best players were, if I may say so, specialists in a particular stroke, in a particular type of tactics. One owes his success to the speed of his service ball, another to the accuracy of his forehand stroke. Today, more and more, in order to have any claim to the inscription of one's name on a cup, the prize of a championship of any importance, it is necessary to know how to execute almost any stroke correctly and perfectly. I am convinced that the service of McLoughlin equaled that of Tilden and that the forehand stroke of Gore equaled that of Johnston, but McLoughlin did not know how to play at the back of the court and Gore had not the backhand stroke nor the volley of Johnston.

A champion of former times nearly always followed the same tactics against any opponent. They played from the back of the court or they were volleyers. To-day any great player is more or less capable of adapting his tactics to those of his opponents. The quarrel between the baseline players and the forecourt players is gently extinguished in a general reconciliation around the new god: the all-round player who knows how to take his chance, either from the baseline or audaciously posted at the net.

The chief characteristic of modern tennis is the speed which is imparted to the ball, the mania always to strike the ball harder and harder. I have never seen Wilding play, but from what I have heard about him I regard him as the precursor of post-war tennis. He never struck the ball, perhaps, harder than certain of his contemporaries struck it when executing some of their strokes, but he always imparted to it the same speed and a sufficient speed never to give his opponents the opportunity of an attack, and to compel them frequently to miss their return.

On a tennis court there are two methods of winning a point: first of all to put the ball beyond the reach of the opponent, or to compel him to miss his return. If there is imparted to the

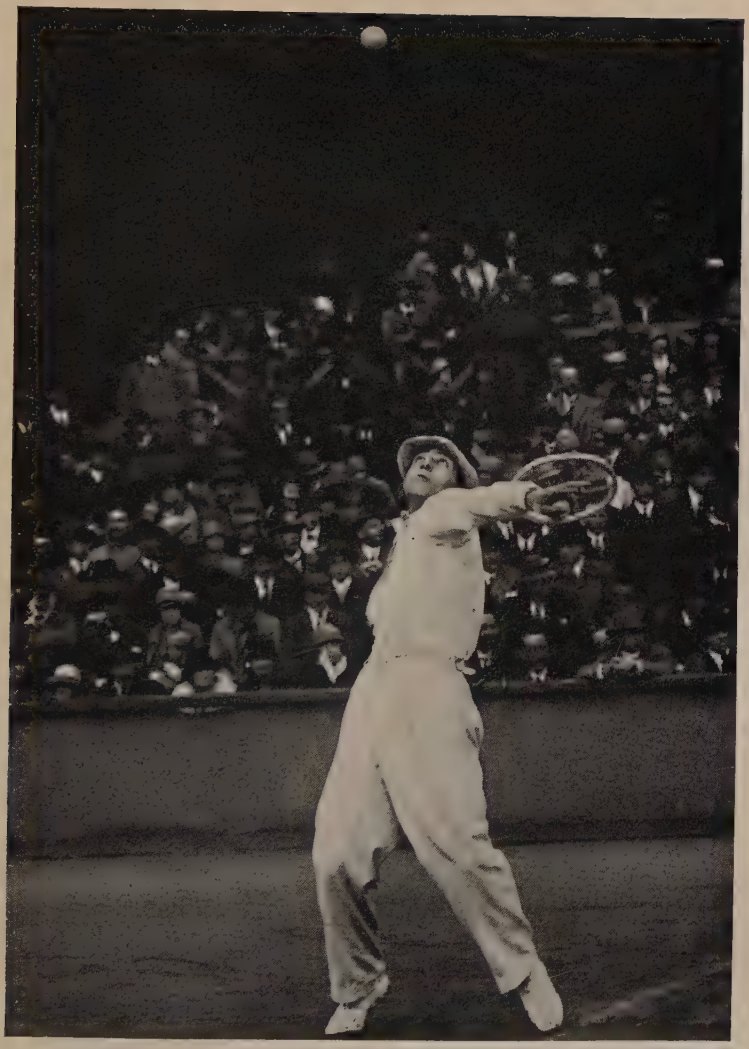


Photo Rol

BEGINNING OF A SERVICE (LACOSTE)

ball merely a moderate speed, one may try to send the ball beyond the reach of the opponent by forced placing, which entails a great deal of risk, or one may be content to wait until the opponent misses. As the game is speeded up one may rely less on the actual placing, but, thanks to speed, keep as many chances of sending the ball beyond the opponent's reach, and greatly increase the difficulty of the task of the opponent when the latter is close to the ball. In a word, speeding up your game often means increasing the difficulty found in executing your stroke correctly, but also increasing in a much larger proportion the difficulty of the task of the opponent.

For years I did not impart enough speed to the ball on the tennis court. Every day now I seek to strike with more force than the previous day. I have not become an aggressive player, but I have learnt by dint of playing against the Americans that to impart a certain speed, always, to the ball is the best way of constituting an impenetrable defense.

To strike the ball harder presents another advantage on a tennis court: it prevents the opponent from placing his return, obliges him to have recourse to a shot generally defensive and thereby obviates chasing a difficult return. To hit hard

means strain for the arm but also a rest for the feet. And the feet suffer long before the arm on the court!

Of all the matches which I have ever played, that in which I confronted Tilden at St. Cloud in the final of the Championship of France, 1927, was doubtless the most exhausting, because I had much running to do, and throughout the match I had only one idea: to force my opponent to adopt tactics of regularity, of precision, which made our game on the whole such a game as was often played on the same court before the war by a Froitzheim and a Decugis. On the contrary, in Philadelphia, and especially in New York in the Championship of America, against the same Tilden I tried to play a faster game. These matches were short and less fatiguing, and I won them more easily the more I sought always to strike fairly hard, without trying so much to hit the ball beyond the reach of my opponent.

Feminine tennis has been evolved like masculine tennis. Suzanne Lenglen showed the lady players that they should copy point by point, stroke by stroke, the execution of the men players, to serve overhead, smash and play at the net. She showed them also that a mixed double and a ladies' double should be played as much as possible like a men's double. I do not believe that

the time has yet come when a woman will triumph on a tennis court over all the best qualified representatives of the stronger sex. Suzanne Lenglen, who so easily dominated feminine tennis owing to her marvelous athletic and intellectual gifts, would not have been able, on her best form, to beat any one of the twenty or thirty men players even in one set.

But feminine tennis, taking inspiration from the technique of masculine tennis, has chosen a road which has brought it nearer to the latter. The credit belongs perhaps more to Miss Wills than to Suzanne Lenglen, for having shown the lady players, as Wilding showed the men, the all-powerful virtue of the speed imparted to the ball at each stroke. None of the lady players who took part at Wimbledon last year would have beaten Suzanne Lenglen, but in the final Miss Wills and Mademoiselle de Alvarez played a game which more resembled a game played by two men than any of the matches which I have ever seen played before. Betty Nuthall, perhaps the future champion lady player of the world, also owes her success to the speed which she imparts to the ball.

Studied separately, each stroke of a modern man player or woman player bears the stamp of that desire always to play more quickly whilst

trying, thanks to the spin imparted to the ball, not to increase the percentage of errors.

To serve was at first simply to put the ball in play, then serving was effected by striking the ball above the head, flat, imparting to it greater speed. The second service ball, at first defensive, also became aggressive when the cut services were invented.

At the back of the court, the movement which is permitted to the player has become more and more complex to allow better utilization of all the muscles. The ball is struck as high as possible to save time and to enable the player to impart to it an extended trajectory. Instead of striking flat, there is a slight lift imparted to it to compel it to fall again within the limits of the court.

It is no longer a question to-day of playing with a single grip. It is not possible, with the grip which allowed a Doherty to play with an admirable precision, to impart, both on the backhand stroke and the forehand stroke, enough speed to the ball, in accordance with the ideal of modern tennis. Tilden, Borotra and Johnston have a special grip for each of their strokes. The volley has been evolved like the forehand stroke or the backhand stroke. It has become more and more aggressive because one plays nearer and

Edwin Levick, N. Y.

HELEN WILLS

nearer to the net and also because one does not hesitate to cultivate separately the execution of each stroke. Formerly a volley was a forehand stroke or a backhand stroke executed by taking the ball before it rebounded. To-day a volley, either forehand or backhand, is a stroke quite distinct from the corresponding stroke executed by the same player at the back of the court, when the ball has rebounded.

Tilden, the most fascinating of modern champions, proved that it was no longer sufficient for an ambitious player to study thoroughly a manner of executing each tennis stroke with the maximum of effect. He showed the benefit there is to be found in being capable of varying his execution sometimes by striking the ball flat, sometimes by imparting to it top-spin, sometimes by undercutting it.

The person who seeks to-day to penetrate the secrets of the technique of tennis is up against a long and difficult task. But to give oneself a difficult task is not always foolish; it lengthens the road which leads to satisfaction, it permits the enjoyment of many more little pleasures as one realizes the progress one is making, pending the ultimate realization of one's dream.

CHAPTER IV

TECHNIQUE

Of all the movements in sport those of the tennis player seem the most natural and easy, but there are scarcely any more complex.

What is, in appearance, more simple than to strike a ball with a racquet? Any lady player watching Suzanne Lenglen is at first astonished that she does not herself play as well, such is the impression of ease, of naturalness given by the incomparable execution of our lady champion. In Kingscote, Cochet and Tilden, an outsider only sees the facility of movements.

But all that is mere appearance. Only perfect coördination conceals the necessary complexity of the movements which permit the preparing, executing and finishing of any stroke. A tennis player who wishes to strike the ball that his opponent sends him must first of all, consciously or not, judge its direction and the speed at which it is coming towards him. He must place himself in accordance with these observations, choose the best way of holding his racquet, bring it back

and prepare all his muscles for the most effective and the most energetic action possible. Then—and this is where the difficulties begin—he must bring his racquet forward and deliver and finish his stroke, recovering his balance rapidly, whilst the more forcefully the stroke has been played the more will this balance have been disturbed.

The eye is a very imperfect instrument for studying tennis. When one watches a tennis match the trajectory which the ball follows is observed rather than the movements of the player. The slow motion film has allowed of dissecting each movement much better, and the observations which it has made possible have thrown an entirely fresh light on certain points of the technique of tennis.

For example, after having been convinced for years that a champion kept his eyes fixed on the ball more than a beginner, I have had to admit, confronted by slow motion films, that many of the best players lifted their eyes before the impact of the ball with the racquet.

As the number of hours passed on the court increases, a tennis player may permit himself to withdraw his eyes sometimes from the ball, because his eye becomes accustomed to reconstituting the entire trajectory which a ball follows by

observing only a portion of this trajectory. As regards the champion, nothing but the result must ever be considered: if he is capable of striking the ball correctly, with regularity, and yet only watching the ball a little, he may simultaneously try to observe the movements of his adversary.

The cinema has shown, better than observation of the player in action, that in almost all tennis strokes the ball is struck flat by the racquet. The influence of the grip of the racquet on the style of the player in general has thus been better understood: to strike the ball with two different grips on the racquet at the same angle it is obviously necessary to execute more or less different movements.

The cinema has confirmed that all good players strike the ball with the arm fully extended. But it has also shown that the muscles of the arm work in a much more complex manner than was thought. The arm should not be considered, in the execution of a stroke, as a rigid lever jointed at the shoulder. One should try to utilize as much as possible the bending and expansion of the two joints of the arm: elbow and wrist.

To execute a forehand stroke, for example, the arm lengthened and stretched should not be

swung back. One should seek to bend the elbow, to keep it low, to maintain the handle of the racquet perpendicular to the forearm. It is only at the moment when the racquet has been brought back, at the moment when it is going to be brought forward again, that the arm lengthens, that the joint of the elbow opens, that the wrist turns back. On striking the ball the arm at first is brought from behind forward around the shoulder, then the forearm, the elbow bending very slightly. Finally the wrist straightens. This action of the forearm and of the wrist takes place just before the impact of the ball against the racquet, so that, at the moment of impact, the arm is perfectly straight, the handle of the racquet being in line with it at the moment the ball is struck. It continues once the ball is struck: whilst the movement slackens, the elbow and the wrist bend forward and bring the racquet handle gently against the chest.

Although many do not admit it, all the great players make use of their wrist, bringing it back and straightening it to increase the speed that they impart to the ball. For a long time I played tennis by trying to keep the arm lengthened from the beginning to the end of a stroke. Even today I do not bend the elbow enough; I prepare

and finish my stroke with the arm too extended, but I work my wrist considerably. On the backhand stroke, as well as on the forehand stroke, numerous photographs prove that I keep the handle of the racquet perpendicular to the ground and to my forearm at the beginning of my stroke, then turning the head of the racquet back and down I strike the ball afterwards at the moment when the handle of the racquet is in line with my arm, and finally bend the wrist again. In all tennis strokes—service, volley, smash on the backhand and forehand stroke—use is made in one way or another of a bending and recall of the joints of the arm to increase the force of the stroke. And it is always noticed that if it is sought to maintain the arm, during the preparation of the stroke, in the extreme position where its return action has to lead it at the end of the stroke, a more effective action is obtained.

The cinema destroys many illusions. It has shown that in order to execute a horizontal forehand stroke, without spin, no player simply brings his racquet horizontally back to bring it forward again in one and the same plane. To give much force to the stroke, the increase of

weight of the racquet being limited by the fatigue of the arm, it is necessary to try to strike the ball as hard as possible, to give the racquet, which is going to strike it smoothly, a trajectory as long as possible. Instead of executing a very short horizontal movement, cut in two by a pause or stoppage at the end of the back swing, the majority of players bring the racquet very far back and unite the trajectory which their racquet describes on coming forward again with that which it has just described in the preparation of the stroke by a loop, which allows the stroke to be continued without interruption, thus increasing the momentum of the racquet. In the service which Patterson adopts, the forehand stroke of Johnston, or my backhand stroke, the head of the racquet describes a trajectory in which there is no abrupt change of direction. Tilden in preparing a forehand stroke slightly raises his racquet. At the moment when the wrist bends backwards, the weight of the racquet seems to pull it from above downwards, and to make it describe, at the moment the direction of the movement is changed, a short loop which allows of avoiding a complete stoppage in the movement. The same loop recurs in the course of the execution of a

backhand stroke, and perhaps in a more accentuated degree in the course of the execution of a service.

The majority of players anxious to acquire a correct style limit their attention to the work of their arm, few concerning themselves with the coördination of the action of all their muscles in order to increase the effectiveness of their stroke.

The arm is a lever jointed at the shoulder; each movement of the latter has a repercussion on the trajectory which the racquet describes in space, and on the stroke in general. The simplest way to increase the effectiveness of a stroke, the speed of the racquet, is to bring the entire body, and, consequently, the shoulder, forward on striking the ball. Tilden and Borotra rarely play, as to the former, a drive, as to the latter, a volley, without moving, in executing a stroke, in the direction which they wish to give to their stroke.

The majority of players play at a standstill, and to advance the shoulder have to lean forward, turning the body in the direction required to bring about a forward movement of the shoulder at the moment the ball is struck. To be able to lean forward, to accompany a forehand stroke or a backhand stroke, the feet must be well placed. But, if for the forehand stroke the left foot is

in front of the right foot, one may, by displacing the equilibrium from the right foot on to the left foot, advance the body and the shoulder. If one tries to lean forward, with the feet on a line parallel with the net, there is a tendency to fall. Johnston plays his forehand stroke standing still, the feet well placed, fairly wide apart, which enables him to lean a good deal forward. Cochet plays his stroke with the feet fairly close to one another, and only recovers his equilibrium when starting forward immediately his stroke is played or by accelerating his pace if he plays his stroke running to meet the ball. This is the most effective and the easiest way of striking hard.

Very few players make use, on the forehand stroke, of a rotation of the top of the body to bring forward the shoulder.

In order to turn the body without losing balance, one has no need of placing the feet as carefully as one does in order to lean forward, but it is very difficult to control a stroke which finds its power in a rotation of the body, because every lateral movement of the shoulder at the moment the ball is struck brings about a change of direction in the stroke itself. Utilized too soon or too late, the rotation of the body causes this lateral movement instead of the movements directed

along the line of flight of the ball, thus rendering impossible the perfect control of the direction of the stroke.

Many players believe that their task is accomplished as soon as the ball is struck. It is true that all the movements executed after the ball has gone cannot directly increase the effectiveness of their stroke; but a racquet stroke, especially if it be vigorous, always creates a certain lack of equilibrium. The manner in which a player finishes his stroke and recovers his equilibrium once the ball is struck, has a certain influence on the stroke itself: the player does not strike the ball with all his strength unless he feels sure of recovering his balance easily immediately afterwards.

To straighten the arm, and follow the ball with the racquet as far as possible, is in my opinion the worst way of finishing a stroke, because this does not enable one to keep the ball longer in contact with the racquet, as is said, and thus to communicate to it a greater speed, but only increases the lack of equilibrium of the body. One's action should not, moreover, be stopped abruptly immediately the ball is struck. The shock of the ball on the racquet should not mark an abrupt discontinuity in the effort, but coincide only with the

moment when this effort is maximum. The movement of the arm should be accelerated gradually until the moment the ball is struck and afterwards should be slowed down gradually, whilst the fully extended arm should be bent by a natural, effortless action. In a good forehand stroke the cinema has proved that all the players commence to bend the arm immediately the ball is struck and concern themselves with nothing more than putting a brake on their action to recover their equilibrium.

The cinema has also shown the extraordinary importance of footwork: the secret of the champions lies in their footwork. A good tennis player should succeed in adjusting his steps instinctively, their cadence and the number of them, in order to be in the correct position for striking the ball. If he does not succeed in doing this, his strokes will always lack force and regularity. When a player habitually executes a backhand stroke less satisfactorily than a forehand stroke, it is often due to the fact that he places his feet badly. When a great player misses a stroke which he usually executes correctly, the reason for this is often that he has not the time or the determination of mind to place his feet well.

My footwork has always been the weak point

in my execution. For a long time past, progress for me meant placing my feet better and more rapidly. I improved 15 the day I decided always to start on my toes because that enabled me to place myself in position more quickly and consequently to place my feet correctly more often. My latest progress has its origin in the attention I pay to never playing a stroke standing still, but always by drawing nearer to the ball and going beyond the point where I struck it.

It is always advantageous, when playing any shot whatsoever, to make the trajectory of the racquet after having struck the ball and the trajectory more or less rectilineal through which it goes away, coincide as exactly and as long as possible. That not only permits striking the ball more easily with the center of the racquet, but imparting to it a greater speed and directing it better. To increase the radius of the curved portion which represents the trajectory of the racquet at the moment when the ball is struck, that is to say, to strike the ball with the arm extended, assists in bringing about this coincidence. To follow the stroke by keeping the arm lengthened perhaps assists to accomplish the coincidence more satisfactorily, to prolong it, but it likewise prolongs the effort at the expense of the general

equilibrium. On the contrary, to play and finish a stroke by drawing nearer to the point where the ball is struck, instead of keeping the feet still, allows of securing a longer and more effortless coincidence between the trajectory of the racquet in space and the trajectory through which the ball goes away, owing to a composition of movement.

All that is very difficult to explain. I have taken years to understand it. Please accept the conclusion which I have drawn therefrom. Not merely in order to reach every and any ball more easily, but also in order to secure a better and more correct execution of each stroke, it is necessary on a tennis court, like a Suzanne Lenglen, a Borotra at the net, a Tilden at the back of the court, never to remain motionless; even at the moment one strikes the ball one must be on the tip-toes.

CHAPTER V

SERVICE

EACH rally in the course of a game of tennis begins by service. Of all tennis strokes service is perhaps the most important: if it be mediocre it means subjection to the attack of the adversary. If it be effective it permits, on the contrary, of taking a real advantage. The superiority of the American and Australian players immediately after the war was chiefly due to the quality of their service. Patterson won at Wimbledon in 1919 and in 1922 thanks to his service, just as Tilden did in 1920 and 1921.

It is possible that the chief reason for the effectiveness of Tilden's service is that the American champion is very tall and that the service of Patterson is only effective because the Australian is unusually powerful, but effectiveness of service is chiefly a question of technique. Look at Brugnon and Johnston, both of them frail and light. They have services much superior to those of Borotra and Cochet, who are marvelous athletes, but who do not execute one movement entirely

correctly. And yet to serve badly is unpardonable. When one executes a forehand stroke, a volley, a backhand stroke, the ball is struck under more or less easy conditions, variable with the state of the ground and the speed, imposed by the adversary. On the contrary, in serving, one may take one's time, and an almost motionless ball is struck, launched by oneself. Every one can and should learn to serve well.

When I serve badly I take a dozen balls and alone on a court I "work" my action. Sometimes, even, I do not content myself with investigating my habitual action on the court. In 1926 in America, before the matches of the Davis Cup, I was serving badly. To recover my usual action, the same evening in my room I served without a ball, before a looking-glass, exactly like a boxer does when shadow boxing. Unfortunately, inconvenienced by an electric bulb hung too low above my head, I acquired the habit of serving into space with the arm folded for fear of striking the bulb. On the court my service became more and more feeble. As luck would have it an instantaneous photograph, taken during the match which I was playing against Johnston on the first day that France and America met, reproduced me striking the ball with the arm bent.

On the next day the electric bulb was broken, but, playing against Tilden, I served better than I ever did in my life because I was straightening the arm well.

Every service, just as each and any stroke, comprises three phases: preparation, execution and end of the stroke, that is to say, return to repose.

When preparing his service, a player should first place himself correctly, seize his racquet, and launch his ball under the best possible conditions. All the great players place themselves, in order to serve, just behind the baseline, as near as possible to the center of the baseline without, however, risking penalization for foot faulting. Tilden, Patterson and Johnston place their left foot against the baseline, about twelve inches from their right foot. They face the right side of the court and not the left. Up to the moment when the ball is struck, the weight of the body rests on the right foot, the left foot scarcely touching the ground. The knees, left first, right afterwards, are flexed in turn during the execution of a service.

Almost all players who have a good service hold the racquet in the same way for serving. Place your racquet flat on a table, put the hand

Tilden's Service

Notice the strong and energetic action of the arm. Tilden strikes the ball as high as he can reach, at full arm's length. Notice the advance of the shoulder at the end of the stroke.

on the handle as if to grasp it. Surround the handle with the fingers so that their extremities, without shifting the racquet, come in contact with the surface of the table. Then raise the racquet with the left hand and, leaving your fingers in contact with the handle, close your hand. You will thus have an excellent grip which will enable you to execute at will straight service, American service and ordinary cut service. Certain players extend the forefinger along the handle. Personally, I believe it better to keep the fingers close against one another. Many players, and particularly lady players, hold their racquet badly for serving, because they aim at serving whilst holding their racquet as if they were executing a forehand stroke. They have then a tendency to push the ball instead of striking it, to attack it too low, to impart a "reverse" spin to it, which lengthens its trajectory and is not easy to control.

Many players also launch their ball badly. In a good service the ball should be struck at the highest point the player can reach with the center of the racquet. It should be launched in such a manner that this point is also the highest point it reaches. That allows of striking it when it is almost motionless. To launch his ball, Johnston, an excellent model for service, simultane-

ously lifts the left hand throwing the ball and the right arm carrying the racquet above the shoulder. He launches the ball almost vertically and strikes it above his right shoulder, with a harmonious and rather slow movement.

The racquet slowly comes up, passes above his right shoulder and descends as far as possible down his back, to reascend afterwards, meeting the ball as high as possible when it passes again with an accelerated movement above his shoulder. At the moment the racquet commences to descend behind the player, the wrist bends backwards, to enable the head of the racquet to descend as low as possible and to describe a complete curve which allows it to pass without any jerk from the descending movement of preparation to the ascending movement of execution. When serving it is always necessary to straighten the wrist very vigorously before striking, in order to attack the ball as high as possible. The wrist must never be kept bent backwards.

Of all tennis strokes service is the one which is least seldom executed with effectiveness without a certain spin being imparted to the ball. Tilden, Brugnon and Patterson impart spins more or less different to the ball when they serve, in order to make it describe a more convex tra-

jectory, to compel it to come more rapidly in contact with the ground immediately the net is cleared. Johnston imparts a very accentuated spin to the ball by striking it from left to right, at its upper part, on the right side. It is not so much a modification of the trajectory which the action of the arm causes the racquet to follow, which provokes the spin, as a rotation of the shoulder carried backwards in the preparation of the stroke, coming forward again at the moment that the ball is struck.

In a good service the action of the arm is strengthened, not only by the rotation of the shoulder, but also by a movement forward of the upper part of the body, by a relaxing of the loins previously flexed at the moment the racquet descends behind the back of the player. Johnston places his feet fairly wide apart and leans forward in order to accompany his stroke. He scarcely relaxes the loins. What remains the characteristic feature of his service is the harmony of the entire movement.

Tilden's movement differs from that of Johnston in the more rapid rhythm, the more abrupt action of the wrist and of the muscles of the arm. Tilden bends the arm much more than Johnston when he serves. He makes very great

use of the muscles of the forearm and of the wrist. He commences and completes his stroke with the arm bent, the handle of the racquet almost perpendicular to the forearm, so that many people think that he does not strike the ball with the arm stretched. They do not notice that his arm is released like a spring which has been well tightened and that, raised on the tips of his toes, Tilden strikes the ball as high as possible without losing an inch of his height.

Johnston's movement is harmonious and simple; that of Tilden jerky and contracted. Tilden is often obliged to lift his right foot at the end of his action in order to reëstablish his balance, shaken by the violence of his efforts. Tilden launches his ball a little more to the left than Johnston, above his head. Whilst Johnston always imparts a little spin to his service ball, whether it be the first or the second, Tilden often serves a first straight ball struck flat which crushes against the ground. It is more necessary to strike the ball as high as possible to succeed with a straight service than with a cut service. If Johnston never serves a straight ball, it is because he knows he is not tall enough to strike the ball high enough and still have some chance of keeping it within the service square, unless he

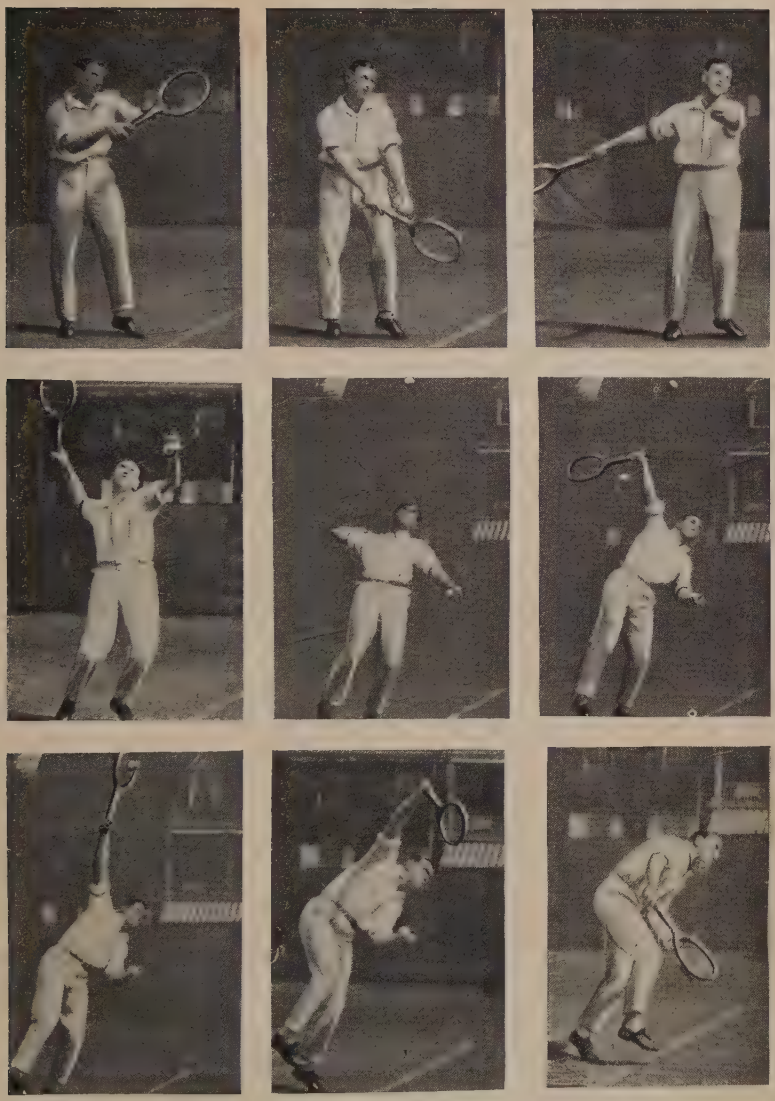
imparts spin to it. Tilden sometimes imparts a little spin to his first service, but always imparts an enormous amount of spin to his second service. He strikes it, like Johnston, from left to right, but owing to relaxing of the wrist, rather than to turning of the shoulder, the racquet sweeps the upper portion of the ball slightly upwards.

Patterson's service is a typical example of "American" service, Tilden's service being intermediary between Johnston's "slice" service and the American service. The service of Patterson is wonderfully effective. Executed without pause or shock, it combines the impulsion due to a gesture which is harmonious, powerful and measured, with a very great relaxing of the loins, prolonged by a forward flexion of the body. Patterson, like Tilden, very often strikes his first ball flat, imparting an absolutely terrific speed to it. One day in 1925 I played against Patterson when he was frequently successful with his first service: I hardly saw the ball pass. Needless to say I did not often return it. When he does not succeed with his first service Patterson launches and strikes his second service above his left ear, and sweeps the upper part, almost like Tilden, from left to right and from the bottom upwards; but whereas the racquet comes in

contact with the right side of the ball in Tilden's service, and especially in that of Johnston, it comes in contact with the left side of the ball in Patterson's. In Patterson's service the spin is chiefly due to a flexing and relaxing of the wrist, extremely violent and fatiguing. Brugnon, who has the best service of any of the French players, serves a ball like Patterson, but since he has not the physique of Patterson he becomes greatly fatigued.

Borotra and Cochet have both very imperfect services, technically. Borotra, instead of bringing his racquet above his shoulder, carries it much too far back. Cochet does not lengthen the arm to strike the ball. Both serve with the arm and the loins, but do not accompany their stroke and do not utilize the rotation of the body. They do not know how to impart spin to the ball, and seldom succeed with their first service, whilst their second ball is easy to return.

I have practiced my service a great deal in tennis, more than any other shot. First of all I served the ball struck flat; then I adopted the American service and, to-day, I generally use the slice service. There is less merit in my actual service than in the fact that I endeavor to vary it as much as possible.



Patterson's Service

It is the most perfect service ever executed. The whole swing is harmonious and powerful. Notice the relaxing of the muscles of Patterson's back when he strikes the ball. Notice also how the spin is imparted to the ball by the wrist work.

Of all tennis strokes service is that which must be most often varied.

The majority of the champions play their forehand stroke or their backhand stroke or any other stroke always in the same manner. On the other hand there are few great players who do not make a point of frequently varying the speed and the spin which they impart to the service ball.

I believe that a good player should know thoroughly how to execute a straight service, a slice service, or an American service. On the other hand I do not think that it is necessary to know how to execute any "reverse" service—any eccentric service copied, for example, by some of those who are responsible for Mishu's reputation as the incomparable eccentric of the courts. All these services fail to pay in proportion to the preparation which they require and the risk which they render necessary.

Many players occasionally follow their service to the net. That is to say, as soon as they have struck their service ball they rush forward to try to volley the return of the opponent.

The rule regarding foot faulting does not permit advancing even a single inch over the court before striking the ball. But one should, under pain of losing precious time, pass the right foot

above the service line and place it a little in front of the left foot immediately the ball has been struck. An effort must be made just before striking the ball to lean forward so as to be drawn towards the net, by the weight of the body, as soon as the ball is struck. A rapid departure towards the net, exactly like a start on a hundred yards sprint, is largely a question of equilibrium of the body. Contrary to what has been generally stated, the action of the American service does not favor a prompt start any more than that of the slice service: only, being slower, an American service gives more time to come close to the net.

Really there is only one way of starting rapidly and that is to lean forward before striking the ball. Richards, without hurrying, gets up very quickly to the net because he utilizes very quickly the forward flexion of the body. He would almost fall if he did not make a step forward immediately his ball is struck. Borotra gets up very quickly to the net, owing to his speed of foot rather than to a well-studied movement.

He leans back a good deal; in fact, at first, strikes the ball quite behind his head, which prevents him leaning forward sufficiently soon to be assisted in his starting.

CHAPTER VI

THE FOREHAND STROKE

The forehand stroke is the most natural stroke and the easiest to execute. A modern champion must know how to execute all the strokes in tennis, and must find himself as much at ease at the net as at the back of the court. The greater part of the time a good forehand stroke is his most effective weapon. That which renders a baseline player redoubtable is almost always the speed and the precision of his forehand stroke. That which renders dangerous the attack at the net of a volleyer is often the powerful forehand stroke which he plays before advancing to the net. Of course it is not always possible to play the forehand stroke, but whenever the choice is open almost all tennis players execute a forehand stroke in preference to a backhand one.

There are a thousand different ways of preparing, executing and finishing a forehand stroke. The actions of Borotra, Williams, Cochet, Tilden, Alonso, Johnston and Howard Kin-

sey, when they play a forehand stroke, all differ more or less from each other.

As all these players have a good forehand stroke it is not really easy for any one seeking a model to make his choice. It may be stated, at most, that a horizontal forehand stroke, the easiest to play, is at the same time almost always the most effective. This is the stroke which pays the champion best, because it is easiest to modify later. It is possible to pass more easily from the flat drive to the cut or lifted drive than to proceed inversely.

As it is necessary to indicate a model, the best that one can choose for the forehand stroke, as moreover for any other stroke, is certainly Tilden. His execution is very flexible and suits every style better than any other, whilst at the same time allowing the most diverse tactics.

Tilden's racquet grip, when he executes a forehand stroke, differs from the grip that I have described apropos of the service, by a rotation of the handle of the racquet in the hand to the extent of about a quarter of a turn. The fingers cover the flat part of the racquet handle which is parallel to the surface of the gut strings, on the side where the ball is struck. On the con-

Tilden's Forehand Stroke

It is the best model to copy. The speed of the ball does not come from the arm action but from the way the ball is struck: on the run, the whole body leaning forward.

trary, for the execution of the service the fingers stop at the edge of this flat part. Many players, as in the case of serving, stretch their forefinger along the handle, but practically the only effect this has is to lessen the firmness of the grip.

Tilden places himself marvelously to execute a forehand stroke. He seldom finds himself too far or too near the ball at the moment he strikes it. Very carefully he keeps himself far away from the ball by preparing his stroke so as to always execute his forehand stroke whilst advancing. At the moment of striking a very high ball he often bends the knees, places his feet fairly far from one another and accompanies the ball by bending forward extremely far. Notwithstanding his height, Tilden takes low bounding balls admirably.

He often takes a ball, apparently out of his reach, at the moment it is going to touch the ground, and executes a marvelous stroke. In 1924 he saved a match against Johnston by recovering far outside the court a volley from his opponent, returning it outside the net post into the opposite corner of the court.

On a tennis court every fraction of a second of immobility reduces the value of a step which

should have accompanied the stroke just played, or which should be made in order to take up a good position for playing the next stroke.

Tilden does not commence his action, does not "prepare" his forehand stroke, very soon. He brings his racquet back as far as possible with a brisk and rapid movement, which he scarcely slackens at the moment when his wrist causes the racquet to describe the short loop which enables him to start forward again without the action showing any abrupt break in continuity. Tilden opens and closes the joints of his elbow and of his wrist during the execution of his stroke. But the speed which he imparts to the ball, rather than from the action of the muscles of his arm, his forearm and his wrist, chiefly originates from the advance of his shoulder and from the length of the lever (racquet handle and arm) at the end of which the ball is struck. It arises also, especially when he returns a low ball and cannot accompany it by leaning forward, from the fact that he rushes to meet it, striking it on the run.

Naturally the trajectory described by the head of his racquet is not horizontal. At first brought back fairly high, his racquet descends in the course of the loop, after which it starts again forward to strike the ball from the bottom up-

wards, the angle of the racquet being perpendicular to the ground. Tilden imparts a slight spin to the ball not only because he strikes it from below upwards, but chiefly because with a movement of the wrist he swings the head of the racquet forward at the moment the ball is struck.

When he finishes his stroke, the head of the racquet makes an angle of forty-five degrees (approximately) with the ground. Tilden finishes his stroke perfectly, fairly low, without effort, slowing down his action smoothly, whilst his arm bends against or rather round his chest.

Although small and very light, Johnston imparts a prodigious speed to the ball, thanks to an extremely harmonious action. Having learnt to play on the very hard Californian courts, where the ball bounds high, he strikes his ball preferably on the level with the shoulder. His racquet grip is very peculiar, corresponding to the habit he has formed of striking the ball very high, thus not allowing him to return a low ball easily. Johnston commences his action very early and executes it without a break in continuity, bringing the racquet rather slowly back, but bringing it very rapidly forward again. Johnston makes a good deal of use of the relaxation following the flexion of the elbow and wrist joints. In pre-

paring his action he brings his racquet so far back that he winds his arm around his head, so to speak, as if he were going to execute a reverse service. At the moment the ball is struck, the wrist, bent far back, straightens. The racquet covers the ball, imparting a lot of top-spin to it. He marvelously controls his balance, the knees being bent and the feet fairly far apart. Although less effectively than Tilden, Johnston is capable of taking a ball on the run; but often, when striking the ball, he executes a sort of jump almost where he stands, which helps him to shift his equilibrium forward and occasionally to place himself in position when he finds that he is a little too far from the ball. The forehand stroke of Johnston is not such a good model to follow as Tilden's, because it would not be suitable for a very tall player. He is, however, very interesting to study because he demonstrates the marvelous result of a perfect coördination of movement, and that a correct action allows any one to play fast tennis.

Cochet, who has an excellent forehand stroke, executes it very cleanly: he prepares his stroke but slightly, brings the racquet only a trifle back without shifting the elbow away from the body. He plays but little with the arm, enormously with

the forearm and the wrist. He takes the ball nearer the body than any other player, his arm unbending rarely to the full, even when the ball is struck.

That which gives so much speed to his forehand stroke is the manner in which he carries his shoulder forward, leaning to the extent that he would fall if his feet were not well placed and if he did not start forward immediately the ball was struck. Cochet imparts no spin to the ball except when he picks up a low ball, sweeping it with a vigorous wrist stroke. Like Johnston, he executes his best drive on a high ball, but rather because the trajectory of his stroke, very extended, allows him to dwell more on his stroke the higher he strikes the ball, than because of his racquet grip, which allows him, when he gives himself to it, to take a low ball perfectly.

Hunter has an excellent forehand stroke which somewhat recalls Cochet's, although it is executed with force, whilst Cochet's is executed flexibly with a much more rapid movement.

Hunter places his feet well, prepares his stroke very early, breaks up his action, like Cochet does very often, into two separate phases by means of a pause at the moment the racquet is brought back. His entire action is curiously slow

and powerful: the muscles of the arm, of the forearm, and of the wrist work with force, remaining contracted. The forehand stroke of Hunter is both precise and rapid, but very mechanical. What I mean is that Hunter nearly always returns one and the same stroke in the same manner. The first time that I met Hunter, in America in 1923, the Englishman Leighton Crawford —a most excellent critic of lawn tennis—pointed out to me that Hunter nearly always answered a crossed forehand stroke by the same stroke and, on the contrary, when playing to his backhand he would invariably run round the ball and play a forehand shot across the court to his opponent's backhand. This astute observation enabled me to anticipate his strokes and to take him often on the wrong foot, which was particularly effective on very slippery ground.

Brugnon has a very rapid and very individual forehand stroke, of which it is almost impossible to guess the direction because he prepares his stroke but little, bringing back his racquet to a very slight extent only. On a high ball, he generally executes a very flat drive by leaning forward; on a low ball, he executes a cut stroke as well as a lifted stroke, constantly changing his manner of holding his racquet. As far as I am

Johnston's Famous Forehand Drive

There is no other forehand executed with such a long swing. Notice the loop the racquet describes behind the head and the action of the wrist. In this particular stroke Johnston struck the ball too close to his body and could not advance the shoulder as should be done.

concerned, there is scarcely a more difficult player to beat than Brugnon, so unforeseen are his strokes. As soon as I see him execute a forehand stroke I expect to lose a point. When I met him at St. Cloud, before playing against Tilden, I considered myself very lucky to win in four sets.

Williams imparts a lot of speed to the ball when he executes a forehand stroke, but he makes a lot of mistakes because he places his feet badly and is compelled, in order to accompany his stroke, to turn the upper part of the body instead of leaning forward. His fault is always to bring the shoulder forward a little too late, which causes the ball to deviate towards the right. Williams has a lot of trouble on that account in succeeding with the cross-court forehand stroke.

A certain number of players execute their drive by imparting to the ball a very pronounced top-spin. Washer, thanks to an extraordinary wrist stroke, executes a top-spin drive which is very effective. Other players, Mishu for example, instead of lifting the ball with the wrist, lift it by striking it with a movement executed upward by the whole arm. When one has exaggerated the lift imparted to the ball it becomes very difficult to control a stroke, which, more-

over, loses greatly in speed. Howard Kinsey sometimes executes forehand strokes which are difficult to take, but in his desire to overlift the ball commits many mistakes.

Few good players always undercut or slice their drives. Tilden, who has an excellent undercut drive, only uses it when he does not win by striking the ball flat. To execute it he commences his action scarcely higher than for his ordinary drive and not quite so far away. He finishes his stroke lower and without accompanying the ball with the shoulder. Spin is imparted to the ball by a flexion of the wrist, which causes the racquet to glide under the ball from top to bottom at the moment it meets it.

The "chop" must never be confounded with the "undercut" drive. Miss Ryan, who has a marvelous chop, carries her racquet very high above, and only very slightly behind, her shoulder. Her entire movement is executed from top to bottom by pushing the ball rather than striking it. The chop seems in reality to be much more like a volley on forehand stroke than a flat forehand drive. That is especially true in the case of a Borotra, for whom a chop is a forehand stroke volley executed by striking a ball which has rebounded.

A forehand stroke less than a service requires variation in order to be effective. The majority of players always impart the same spin and generally a little lift to the ball. Some only, from time to time, undercut it.

My forehand stroke was at one time my best stroke. Then, as my backhand stroke improved, it fell off and was soon noted as my worst stroke. For a long time, my feet being badly placed, I dared not, for fear of committing too many errors, attack much with my forehand stroke. And as a backhand stroke, although excellent, is rarely very aggressive, my entire play took on a solely defensive style.

To-day, by dint of work, I have succeeded in improving my footwork and, thanks to a modified grip, I "lift" the ball a little and can attack on forehand stroke. I have a great deal of trouble still in directing it as easily towards the right as towards the left. In theory, a player should always execute the same movement irrespective of the direction which he desires to impart to the ball. The position of the feet alone should change with the direction of the stroke, but in practice after a good deal of investigation I have noticed that the majority of players modify their action more or less. To-day, when I wish to

make a cross-court drive, to direct it towards my left, I aim, when preparing my stroke, at not bringing the racquet very far back so that it may come more rapidly forward again, to strike the ball sooner and direct it towards the left so that I need to think of the position of my feet. On the contrary, to direct the ball towards the right, I carry my racquet very far back a little lower than for playing a crossed forehand stroke, in such manner that it strikes the ball later from bottom to top, when it has already reached the level of my shoulder.

Richards' Backhand Volley

This volley, a high one, is beautifully executed. Notice how Richards, placing his feet badly most of the time, controls his balance.

CHAPTER VII

BACKHAND

THE forehand stroke is nearly always the first stroke that a beginner studies. That is all right providing that at the end of a certain time he has the courage to waive the satisfaction of succeeding with a forehand stroke in order to try to execute a backhand one. There is only one way of improving a stroke, and that is to execute it often. If, so far as the majority of players are concerned, the backhand stroke seems less easy than the forehand stroke, this is because many of them will run "round" a ball in order to avoid executing a backhand stroke. The disposition of the joints of the arm, the manner in which the muscles play which command their flexion, do not perhaps allow striking a ball with as much force backhand as on the forehand stroke. But the example of Tilden, of Borotra, of Williams, and many others is there to prove that if one does not mind taking a little trouble it is possible quickly to succeed in disposing of any reasons for avoiding the execution of a back-

hand stroke. My backhand stroke is not so aggressive as my forehand stroke, but, accustoming myself to an extensive use of my backhand stroke, I have made of it a stroke which is more steady and perhaps more accurate than my forehand stroke.

Tilden has an admirable backhand stroke, which is very reliable and very fast. It is the best model that can be chosen. To execute a backhand stroke Tilden holds his racquet almost as if for serving, but naturally he strikes the ball with the opposite side of the racquet. In contrast to the majority of players he keeps the fingers close to one another and does not extend his thumb along the handle of the racquet. If the majority of the players lack force, and are incapable of imparting any speed to the ball in executing a backhand stroke, that is probably because they hold the racquet badly, too frequently as if they were about to execute their forehand stroke. To be able to strike with power, in executing any stroke whatsoever, care must be taken to place the palm of the hand as much as is possible and comfortable, behind the handle of the racquet, and never in front of the handle. When the backhand stroke is executed with a correct grip for the forehand stroke, the palm of

the hand which was somewhat behind the racquet when playing the forehand stroke is now in front of the racquet when the backhand stroke is played, the ball being struck with the opposite side of the racquet. The racquet is pulled, without force, instead of being pushed.* I believe that it is better, when executing a backhand stroke, to place the thumb along the handle rather than around the handle, because that insures, without greatly changing the grip that I utilize for the forehand stroke, that the palm of the hand is behind the handle when making the backhand stroke.†

Tilden, on getting ready to return a ball with the backhand stroke, applies exactly the same principle as when he desires to execute a forehand stroke. He remains rather far away from the ball until the last moment, strikes it, leaning forward if it is a high ball, and advancing without stopping if it is a low ball. Most bad backhand strokes reveal more or less defective footwork. Cochet and Patterson, who both have an excellent forehand stroke, lack a good deal as regards

* Some players may be able to attain some degree of excellence by this method, but I cannot recommend it.

† It is difficult to describe in words the variation in grips. I would suggest a close study of the actual photographs of the grips of famous players, as shown in this book.

the backhand stroke because they place themselves badly. In reality it is not more difficult to place oneself in order to execute a backhand stroke than to execute a forehand stroke. But it is very difficult to be always ready to place oneself facing the left side of the court with the left foot forward, and facing the right side of the court with the right foot forward.

For the majority of players (because they play by preference more often with the forehand stroke than with the backhand stroke) to place themselves facing the right side is more natural than to place themselves facing the left side to execute a backhand stroke. Until the day when they have accustomed themselves to playing a great deal with the backhand stroke they will place themselves less satisfactorily to execute backhand play than forehand play. That is a kind of vicious circle. Backhand strokes are missed mainly because we place ourselves badly, and we place ourselves badly because, for fear of missing on backhand play, we do not build up the proper natural stroke.

Tilden prepares his backhand strokes like his forehand strokes, with a fairly rapid movement. He brings his racquet up very high and far back, turning the top of the body much more than

when he prepares a forehand stroke. The majority of the players do not turn the shoulders enough when they prepare a backhand stroke. At the moment when, in order to strengthen their stroke, they try to advance the shoulder, they only succeed in moving it from the left to the right, lose a great deal of force, and control their strokes badly. An effort must be always made in tennis only to move those parts of the body the moving of which influences the trajectory of the racquet (as in the case of the shoulder) either by getting nearer the ball or by following it when it goes away after it is struck.

The factor which enables me to impart to the ball on a backhand stroke more speed than is given to it by many other players, is that of bringing my racquet extremely far back on preparing my stroke. Somewhat after the manner of Johnston preparing his forehand stroke, I wind my arm round my neck, so to speak. I also turn the top of the body very considerably, bringing my right shoulder very far back to swing it forward again afterwards.

Most players strike the ball lower on the backhand stroke than on the forehand. This is nearly always the case because they move backwards to save time and improve the execution

of a stroke of which they are not very sure; sometimes also because they realize that they have less strength to strike a high ball than to strike a low one. The disposition of the joints of the arm and of the muscles does not permit the developing of much force when the ball is struck higher than the waist. Many players execute the backhand or the forehand stroke without distinction in the course of the game. On the contrary, in order to return the service, being often obliged to strike the ball rather high, nearly all the players endeavor to avoid executing a backhand stroke. Tilden in the middle of a rally is at least as dangerous on backhand play as on forehand play. On the contrary, I have seen him much embarrassed when Brugnon, whose service rebounds very high, served on his backhand in the course of the match which they played at Wimbledon last year.

Tilden finishes his backhand stroke perfectly without straightening the arm much, generally bringing back his racquet smoothly rather low in front of his right hip. To nearly all the players it is more difficult to finish a forehand stroke than a backhand stroke, because it is not possible, owing to the disposition of the joints of the wrists, to gently break the flight of the arm by

bringing it round the body. But it must be restrained, all the muscles being contracted.

Many players cut their backhand stroke, especially when they strike the ball rather high. That is natural to some degree, exactly as it is natural to lift a forehand stroke which is well attacked. In fact, to accomplish a forehand stroke one leans forward. To lean forward when facing the right side of the court not only has the effect of advancing the right shoulder, but it also raises it and brings about the lift. On the contrary, in order to accomplish a backhand stroke, to lean forward, when one is facing the left side of the court, it is necessary to lower the right shoulder, and to undercut the ball more or less.

Tilden almost always undercuts his backhand stroke when he strikes the ball high. On the contrary, when he takes a low ball he strikes it flat or imparts to it a very slight lift with a flexion of the wrist. It is only in order to take a ball high that the tendency exists to impart, as from the shoulder, lift to the forehand stroke, and undercut spin to the backhand stroke, because one cannot lean forward to accompany the ball unless it is struck rather high. To return a low ball it serves no purpose to lean forward, because

the action of the advance of the shoulder is transmitted to the racquet out of the perpendicular, the shoulder being above and not behind the arm.

Johnston's backhand stroke is not the equal of Tilden's and is much less aggressive and accurate than his forehand stroke. It is worthy of study, however, because it is executed in quite a peculiar manner. Johnston in backhand play and in forehand play strikes the ball with the same side of the racquet, changing his grip but slightly; as when he plays the forehand stroke, the manner in which he holds his racquet, the palm of the hand well behind the handle, allows him to strike a high ball with a great deal of power. With the possible exception of Williams, who, utilizing in backhand play as in forehand play, and more judiciously, a very complete rotation of the upper part of the body, vigorously attacks balls which rebound very high, Johnston is one of the players who is the least inconvenienced by an American service directed into his left court. He proves it every time he plays against Patterson, who, when serving, finds the ball coming back regularly to his feet at the very spot where it is most difficult to deal with it.

The last time I met Johnston, at St. Cloud in 1923, he nearly always undercut his backhand

Lacoste's Peculiar Backhand Stroke

Lacoste's swing when he plays a backhand is extremely wide. Notice the very peculiar wrist work and the rotation of the body from the hips.

stroke, which was then nothing but a defensive stroke which he played quietly, waiting to place a forehand stroke and to take position at the net. The forehand stroke of Johnston has remained a very fast one, but less so than formerly, the American champion remaining much more often at the back of the court. His backhand stroke is now almost as fast as his forehand stroke, and he plays it by striking the ball at the end of a full swing.

As soon as one returns a shot to Johnston's backhand (as well as to his forehand), a slow ball, he imparts to his return, owing to his admirably measured action, such a speed that the ball is not often returned to him. It was only this year that I realized that the only way of beating Johnston was to attack him in his very execution, and never to return him anything but very fast balls, so as never to allow him to take his time in executing the very long movement which characterizes his style when he executes a backhand or a forehand stroke.

A certain number of players when they execute a backhand stroke sweep the ball with a vigorous wrist stroke, imparting an excessive lift or top-spin to it; for instance, Washer, Mishu and Aeschliman.

Still less in backhand play than in forehand play do I believe in the effectiveness of an excessive lift, because one has less strength to give much speed to the ball and it is scarcely wise to waste a part of it in order to impart spin instead of pace to the ball. Many players undercut their backhand stroke, which is more natural, but never permits much speed. The best forehand stroke is slightly lifted, being varied by undercutting the ball from time to time. The best backhand stroke is almost flat, being varied by undercutting the ball, especially if it is struck very high. The position of the feet in backhand play, as in forehand play, should be alone responsible for the direction of the stroke. In practice the majority of the players modify their action as in forehand play according to the direction which they desire to give to their stroke, and prepare their cross-court backhand stroke by bringing the racquet back slightly higher and not so far as when they desire to send the ball towards their left. Nearly all the players, perhaps because they do not turn sufficiently towards the left, find it easier to place their backhand stroke across the court. That is not always bad, because it generally compels the adversary to make use in turn of his backhand stroke to return the ball. But it

has the serious drawback of permitting the opponent to anticipate the stroke, if it is always played in the same way.

One should never allow oneself to play automatically, regularly, always on the same side. One should be capable not only of playing across the court but of directing the backhand straight along the line. It is an essential condition in order to provide defense against such good volleyers as Borotra and Cochet.

CHAPTER VIII

VOLLEYS

THERE were formerly very great champions who never took a ball before it had touched the ground, so to speak, who did not know how to execute a volley. Even to-day a Sleem, a Petersen, a Jacob, only venture near the net against their inclination, and very rarely. A match may be won from the back of the court: service, forehand stroke and backhand stroke are the only strokes that Suzanne Lenglen ordinarily utilizes, and it is not rare to see Tilden win a match without executing a volley. On the other hand it is true that the study of the forehand stroke and the backhand stroke should precede that of the volley. However, the volley appears more and more to be an indispensable stroke: a modern champion should know how to play at the net, should feel as much at his ease when he plays a volley as when he plays the ball off the ground. He should be capable whenever the opportunity offers to finish a rally with a decisive volley.

TILDEN'S BACKHAND STROKE

Notice how high the racquet is brought up at the beginning of the stroke. Notice also the perfection of the footwork.

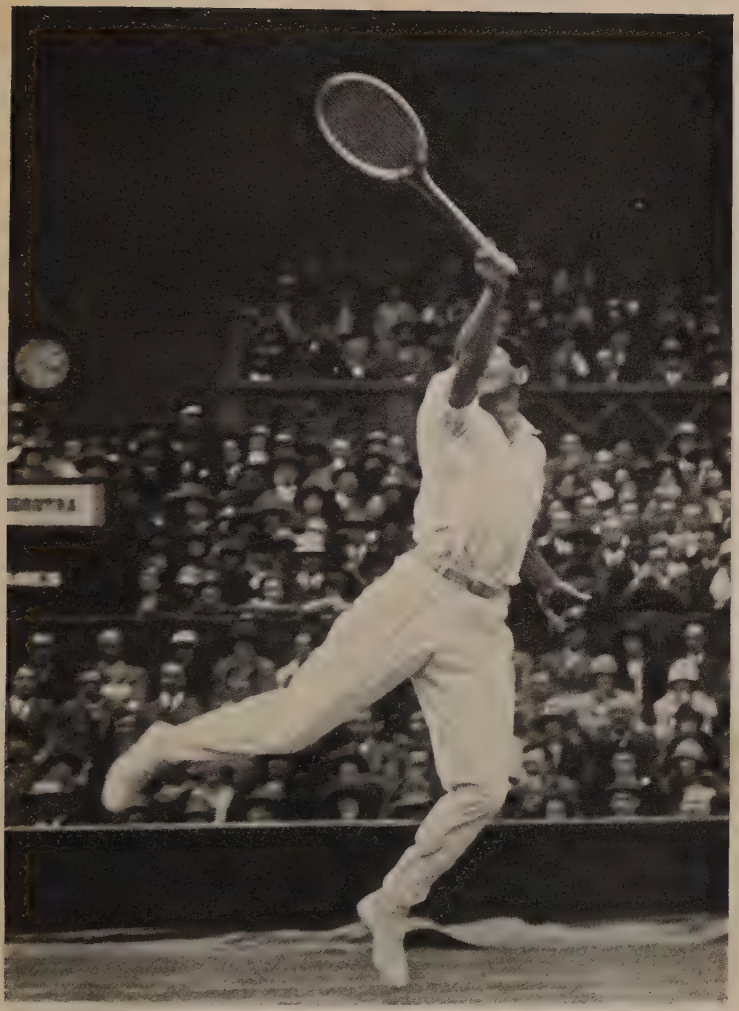
The conditions under which a volley is executed are very different from those under which a forehand stroke or a backhand stroke is played at the back of the court. There is never so much time, as will be easy to understand, to execute a volley near the net as to take, further away, a ball that has been allowed to rebound. It requires a sure and rapid judgment and quick reflex actions to make a good volleyer. On the other hand one cannot hope to take at the net, however speedy one may be, any stroke of the adversary. Unless one has anticipated it and can get into position with some degree of certainty one is often forced to let a fast and well-placed return go by.

On the contrary, by volleying instead of letting the ball bound, much less time is given to the opponent to deal with your return. Finally, near the net it is easier to find more open angles where the ball can be placed beyond the reach of the fastest player.

These conditions for the execution of the volley fix both the technique of the player at the net and the manner in which he places himself and directs his strokes. They are what render it necessary that a good volley should be executed, with a short movement, to gain time, as near as possible

to the net in order to be more aggressive, for it is essential, as risks must be met, to attack when at the net.

The execution of Jean Borotra, even at the net, is often discussed. Personally I am sure that it is necessary to seek in the perfection of his strokes at the net something apart from his speed, the inner secret of the effectiveness of his volleying. Borotra holds his racquet very well at the net. In backhand play he holds his racquet almost the same as he does at the back of the court. Moreover this is what the majority of the players do, except perhaps those who, like Washer for example, lift their backhands enormously at the back of the court. Such players find it very hard to execute a low volley with the same grip they use to impart top-spin to the ball. To execute a volley on the forehand, Borotra holds his racquet much the same as he does for executing a forehand stroke at the back of the court. His fingers just take the flat part of the front of the handle. In backhand play, as in forehand play, the palm of Borotra's hand, owing to a rotation of a little more than a quarter of a turn, is applied behind the racquet rather than in front. This is still more essential at the net than at the back of the court, because a volley is often pushed



Topical Press Agency

HIGH BACKHAND VOLLEY (BOROTRA)

more than struck. A long movement is not executed to increase the momentum of the racquet launched forward, and all the speed of the ball comes from the action of the wrist.

A certain number of players claim to backhand volley and forehand volley with the same grip, but at the net no more than at the back of the court is it possible to attack vigorously, without changing the manner of holding the racquet, a ball which is placed to the left as well as the right.

Borotra places his feet admirably at the net. The rapidity with which he shifts his position is astonishing. The perfection of his footwork and the equal perfection with which he controls his balance are particularly worthy of admiration. Many people imagine that careful placing of the feet is unnecessary for executing a volley. In fact, to advance the left foot when striking the ball in forehand play, the right foot when striking the ball in backhand play, is perhaps still more necessary at the net than at the back of the court. The margin of safety of a volley is, and should always be, so small that if a player does not place his feet well he will not perfectly control his balance and will miss his stroke. It is possible, more often at the net than at the

back of the court, to be successful with an excellent stroke with the feet badly placed, but it is more difficult still to become a good volleyer than a good baseliner if the feet are habitually badly placed.

Borotra does not carry his racquet very far back in preparing a volley, not nearly so far back as for taking a ball at the back of the court, but the racquet is held just as high. He strikes the ball very much in front of the shoulder downward, undercutting it slightly, especially in forehand play. In forehand play or backhand play at the back of the court, the racquet moves around the player, striking the ball at the moment it describes a portion, slightly flattened (by the extension of the arm, etc.), of a movement which, as a whole, is circular. At the net the action of the player is shorter, the racquet shifting almost exactly from back to front. In finishing a volley on forehand play, for example, no player brings his arm across his chest. He checks the racquet more or less abruptly in front of him. Still less at the net than at the back of the court one should never endeavor, in order to follow the stroke, to straighten the arm as far as possible once the ball is struck. On the other hand, there is scarcely time, except to take a high and low ball, to uti-

lize, for increasing the speed imparted to the ball, either a rotation of the body or a flexion forward of the upper part of the body. Generally, the muscles of the arm, of the forearm and of the wrist suffice to impart the necessary speed to the ball, exactly as in the execution of a stroke at the back of the court.

At the net, as at the back of the court, the racquet is not brought back, then forward, horizontally, by a rigid arm, but describes a complex trajectory, which is characterized naturally by a much shorter loop, but which nevertheless permits executing the entire movement without shock or stoppage, and with more muscular force. The wrist works a great deal at the moment the ball is struck in sliding the racquet under the ball, which increases the spin imparted. If one scarcely utilizes either flexion or rotation of the body to accompany a volley with the shoulder, it is necessary always to endeavor at the net to strike the ball by drawing nearer to it, and going beyond the point where one strikes it. At the net, still more than at the back of the court, constant movement is essential, keeping the feet fairly close together and well on the toes, the knees slightly bent in order to get away rapidly. You should never spare your steps, you should

never fear making a few steps more in order to strike the ball by advancing, which increases still further the speed of your stroke and which will enable you to execute a high volley in place of a low volley. From the back of the court a stroke can be played as effectively by striking the ball on a level with the knee as in striking it on a level with the shoulder. At the net one should always be certain to put beyond the reach of the adversary a ball which is struck on a level with the shoulder; and one should know, on the contrary, that every time one executes a low volley the adversary will probably pass him with his next stroke. From a technical point of view Borotra executes the same movement, or nearly so, irrespective of the height at which he strikes the ball. To take a low volley, he bends the knees, squatting more or less, but his action remains similar to what it is when he strikes the ball on a level with the shoulder. On the contrary, certain players, Brugnon and Suzanne Lenglen for example, instead of pushing the ball when they wish to execute a high volley, strike it in exactly the same way as at the back of the court. They play this stroke with much success, and it seems with less risk. But Borotra puts the ball beyond the reach

of the adversary just as easily as they do, because he can place it better.

Richards is a marvelous volleyer, less aggressive than Borotra (because he plays farther away from the net), but extremely steady and accurate. He undercuts the ball a great deal and executes a considerably more complete movement than Borotra. Of all the players that I have ever seen he is the one who has the best low volley. He is one of the few who can put the adversary in difficulty irrespective of the height at which he strikes the ball, so well does he direct his stroke. Cochet at the net, more than at the back of the court, has a very peculiar execution. He contents himself nearly always, except when he strikes a high ball, with a forehand stroke, opposing the racquet to the ball and pushing it, without cutting it, with the wrist. What constitutes the value of his play at the net is chiefly that he plays very close up, marvelously anticipates the strokes of the adversary and places in a very unexpected manner his volleys, sometimes long, sometimes short and crossed.

Johnston has an excellent, very aggressive volley. As at the back of the court, in backhand play or in forehand play, he strikes the ball with

the same side of the racquet. He imparts a fairly pronounced spin but especially a lot of speed to the ball by adding power to his stroke with the shoulder much more so than any other player.

Under no pretext should a volley be lifted if it can be avoided. Lift cannot be imparted to a ball without preparing, a long way off, the movement that is executed, and the length of a lifted ball is always less controlled than that of a straight or undercut ball.

I have taken a long time to learn to play properly at the net. For too long I persisted in playing without changing my grip and in striking the ball instead of pushing it. Even to-day I have not yet succeeded in ridding myself of the habit of the mechanical action that I always used for returning any ball from the net as from the back of the court.

CHAPTER IX

LOB AND SMASH

In its relation to other strokes—volley, service, backhand or forehand stroke—the lob plays more or less exactly the rôle of the poor relation. The difficulty of the lob is first of all greatly underrated: a successful lob is rarely applauded as it should be.

The utility, the necessity, of the lob is, in particular, rarely understood: the majority of players lob at hazard when they no longer know where to turn, without appearing very convinced of the efficacy of the stroke which they execute. In fact one could not be a real champion without lobbing: every time one is opposed to an intelligent and fast volleyer, it would be impossible to win if, from time to time, instead of trying to pass him with a low and rapid ball, one did not try to put the ball out of his reach by making it describe a high and slow trajectory, if, in a word, lobbing were not resorted to.

Tilden lobs admirably, with an extraordinary accuracy, and without his adversary being able

to guess, when he prepares his stroke, that he is not simply going to execute an ordinary forehand or backhand stroke.

It is to his lobs much more than to his passing shots that Tilden owes his beating Borotra almost certainly. It was a series of accurate and fortunate lobs which enabled me to beat Borotra, then in marvelous form, in the final of the Championship of America in 1926. The day before and the previous day, Borotra had played very hard matches against Johnston and Richards. Throughout the first set I applied myself to lobbing each time that he came up to the net. Meeting with extraordinary success, I executed a series of lobs which passed just outside his reach and which he tried to take after they had touched the ground, each time just before the baseline, thus tiring himself out. Borotra led four games to two in the first set, but after that he could not quite recover his wind and never came up to the net with confidence.

When it is successful, a lob is an extremely difficult stroke to return. Quite recently, when tuning up my "training machine," I amused myself by adjusting it so that it sent lobs which were as perfect as possible, passing the net at the height of twelve to fifteen feet and falling on

the baseline. Out of ten smashes that I tried I could not succeed with more than one or two of them.

There is scarcely anything more difficult than to return a good lob, unless it is to execute it. One scarcely imagines the difficulties there can be in properly regulating the height, the length and the direction of a lob. To lob well requires an exact knowledge of the result corresponding to the force that one uses, as much and more precision than a fast stroke. If, in lobbing, you do not strike the ball exactly with the center of your racquet, you will send your adversary, instead of a ball which will pass just beyond his reach, a ball which he will have no trouble in returning outside your reach. A lob which is not perfect is, as a rule, a complete failure.

Every time you can do so, lob like Tilden, by making a movement as much as possible like the movement which enables you to give the ball, when forehand playing or backhand playing, an almost horizontal direction. Prepare your stroke in the same way, only bringing the racquet lower. Strike the ball upwards with a slow and measured action, but grip your racquet as hard as for executing the fastest drive and do not shorten your action.

Always avoid, when about to execute a lob (except when you cannot do otherwise), simply opposing the racquet to the ball. In executing a more complete movement, one lobs in a much surer manner, and there is more chance of surprising an adversary who expected a fast ball when he saw you bring your racquet far back.

Many players, in order to control the length of their lobs better, undercut them slightly, but the spin greatly slows down the speed of a lob and allows the adversary to step back to smash. A certain number of players, as for example Shimidzu, the marvelous little Japanese, and Kinsey, the Californian player (who has become a professional), sometimes execute low and fast lobs by vigorously lifting (i.e., top-spinning) the ball. This is a very difficult stroke to deal with, but still more difficult to execute.

Summing up, in order to lob well you must not impart much spin to the ball. When compelled by the speed of a ball, one should content oneself with opposing the racquet to the ball, in order to lob; in a desperate case it is possible to be successful with a purely defensive stroke by undercutting the ball. On the contrary, when there is plenty of time for lobbing (when, in lobbing, a well settled kind of tactics is followed) one

may, like Tilden, impart a slight lift which increases the effectiveness of the lob, making an aggressive stroke of it. If the player cannot reach the ball when it passes above his head, he has little chance to take it when it has already touched the ground, because it is too rapid and rebounds very fast. But the best and most accurate lob is executed by striking the ball quite flat.

Lobbing can be done not only from the back of the court, but sometimes also from the net when playing against an adversary also posted at the net. The volley lob is a stroke of an extremely difficult kind which rarely pays, but which is one of the nicest that can be accomplished.

Cochet is one of the players who execute and are most frequently successful with volley lobs, by means of a measured and precise opposition of the racquet. He thus frequently disconcerts his adversaries in doubles, but also sometimes discourages his partners when he fails, without concerning himself, with two or three volley lobs successfully. For a volley lob, if it is not absolutely perfect, still more than a lob played from the back of the court, involves the abandonment of all hope.

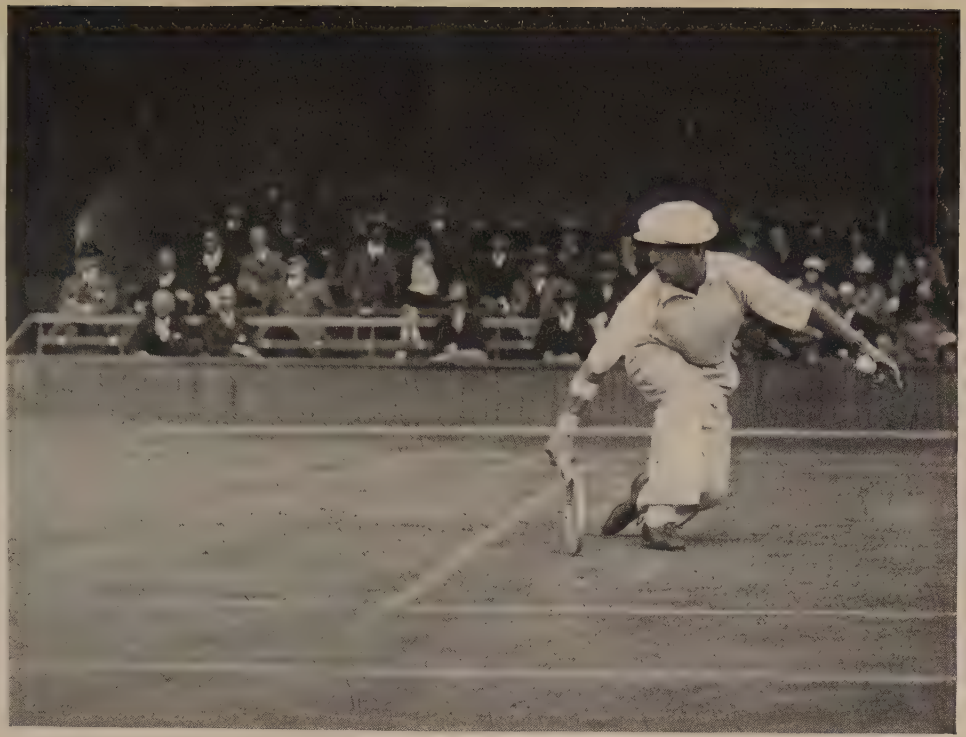
One may also lob from the back of the court

when the adversary is himself back. When a fast stroke puts one in difficulty, instead of returning an equally fast ball one may often do better to execute a lob, not too high, but slow enough to permit one to find the necessary time to replace oneself, well in the middle of the court, to take the adversary's return stroke more easily.

Smash

The smash is the stroke which the player executes at the net to return a lob. He strikes the ball above his head, smashing it against the ground, outside the reach of his adversary. It is indispensable to know how to smash well, because it permits winning numerous points by sending outside the reach of the adversary all the rather short lobs which he plays, and also because it permits volleying quite near the net without fear of being placed in difficulty by any lob. More so than an ordinary volley, a smash should always be as aggressive as possible. To content oneself with putting a lob in play nearly always means supplying the adversary with an opportunity to put the ball beyond your reach, and invariably letting pass an opportunity of finishing the point.

From the technical point of view, the smash is a reproduction of the service, but, instead of



Photopress

BACKHAND LOW VOLLEY (LACOSTE)

striking the motionless ball without having to move in order to reach it, it is necessary in smashing to strike a ball the trajectory of which it is extremely difficult to judge accurately, and to execute one's stroke by moving backwards, or advancing, as well as in moving towards the right, towards the left, or also even in jumping.

To smash well requires a closer following of the ball with the eyes than is necessary for any other stroke, demands a more rapid and precise footwork, a perfect control of the balance of the body in the most extraordinary and unsought positions. What permits Cochet and Borotra to smash with such force, both easily and naturally, is the certainty and rapidity with which they place their feet.

The majority of players hold their racquet, prepare, execute and finish their movements for smashing exactly as for serving. One should always avoid imparting any spin to the ball when smashing. This not merely diminishes the speed of the ball but also increases the difficulty of the stroke to no purpose. A player who serves without imparting spin to the ball, like Cochet or Borotra, or who, like Richards, cuts his service but little, will, quite naturally, strike the ball flat when smashing without changing his move-

ment. He will have much more chance of smashing well than Brugnon or Tilden, who cut their service enormously and are obliged to modify their action, more or less, for smashing.

A certain number of players, Johnston for example, smash with a slight cutting of their ball, just as when executing slice service, but, when smashing, any movement which suggests the American service should be avoided.

The most important requirement for smashing well is, perhaps, confidence. My smash has always been my worst stroke because I cut my service a good deal, and because I neither recoil nor place myself very rapidly when I see a lob coming. But my chief reason for having missed smashes has been the fear of missing them. Brugnon seldom misses smashes in training. Last year in the doubles match of the Davis Cup Challenge Round he missed a series of easy smashes simply through lack of confidence. On the following morning I asked him to play for a little while to prepare me for the match that I had to play on the same afternoon against Tilden; in practicing my lob, I compelled him to play several difficult smashes with which he was marvelously successful because he had no fear whatever of missing them.

In tennis reference is often made to the backhand smash, but in reality there is no justification for baptizing this shot with the name "smash," other than the height at which the ball is struck, those high backhand volleys sometimes executed so successfully by Borotra, Johnston or Richards. The high backhand volley is one of the most difficult strokes in tennis, necessitating perfect footwork and an extremely strong wrist.

It is not possible to smash or volley all lobs. Very often, surprised on the wrong foot, launched forward or even too near the net, one has no other resource than to recoil quickly to take a ball once it has rebounded. If the ball then rebounds sufficiently, instead of executing a forehand or a backhand stroke it may also be returned with a smash.

Even more than an ordinary smash, this stroke recalls service and is difficult to bring off successfully. Cochet, Richards and Patterson often execute very fine smashes by allowing a lob to rebound. Smashes that Max Decugis executed at the back of the court are still spoken of to-day.

Short Balls

Either in forehand or in backhand play, instead of putting the adversary in difficulty by a

long and fast ball one may try to surprise him with a short ball which gently passes the net. Such a stroke is extremely difficult to bring off successfully, demanding a control of the ball comparable to that which is necessary for good lobbing.

Few players make good use of short balls; for the greater part of the time they try to impart to the ball a spin which makes it come back, to prevent the adversary from being able to touch it. They try to such an extent that they only succeed in their stroke about one time out of ten. One must not consider the short ball as a means of winning a point, but as a means of tiring the adversary by obliging him to run forward and backward as well as from one side to the other, or, by attracting him near the net, to put him subsequently in difficulty by means of a lob. The undercutting of a short ball should not be overdone, the aim being confined to making it fall close over the net and rebound too short for the adversary to be able to execute a winning shot.

I have often tired and bothered Tilden, who does not like to come to the net against his will, by sending him short shots and cross-court shots alternating with good length shots.

However, in the last two matches I played

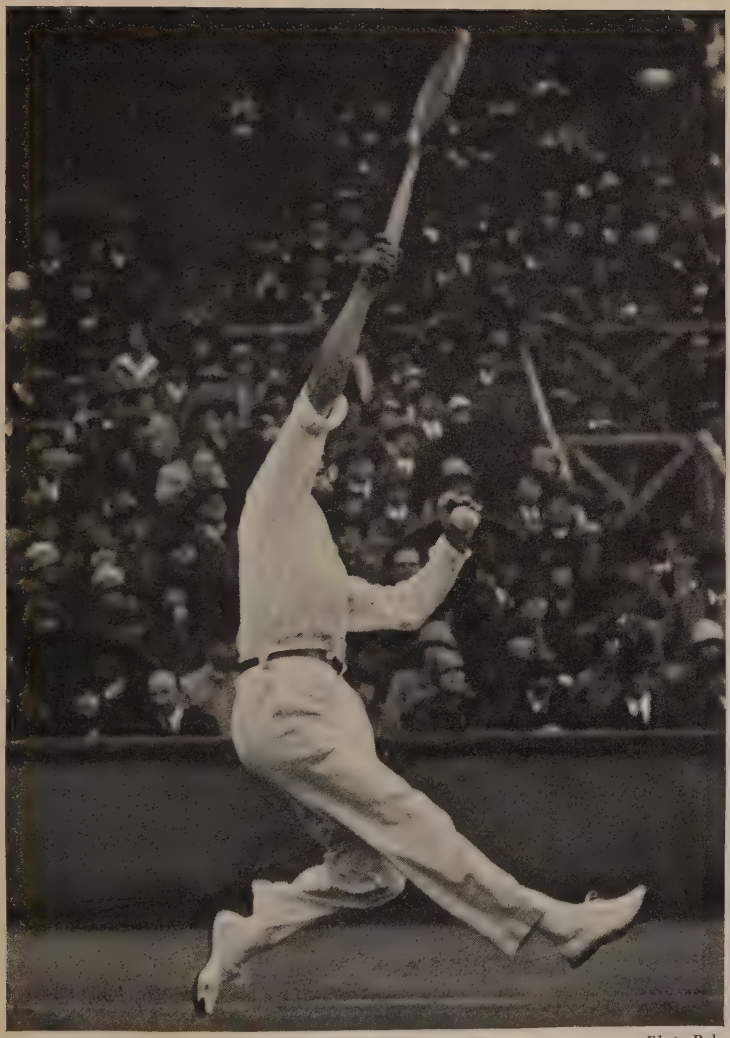


Photo Rol

A Beautiful Smash (Cochet)

against Tilden I did not often play short and I came off very well.

From the back of the court the moderate use of the short ball is admissible: at the net the use of short-stop volleys should be condemned: on every occasion that one can finish a rally—and to finish the rally should be invariably the sole thought of the player at the net—with a stop volley, one would have been able at less risk to place a straight and long or cross-court volley, in every case fast, outside the reach of his opponent.

CHAPTER X

POSITION ON THE COURT

WHEN the player has learnt to execute the essential strokes in tennis he must learn as quickly as possible to place himself well. The majority of players on a tennis court choose their position for play with the sole idea of being able to reach as many balls as possible with the minimum of trouble. They do not realize that the position in which one stands to play has a marked effect on the value of a stroke, and that the base of operation chosen for returning service, or during the course of a rally, should be selected with due regard to certain technical conditions.

There is no better marking of the moment when one ceases to be a beginner and starts to become a champion, than the manner of placing oneself. What constitutes the strength of a Johnston is the fact that he places himself to execute any stroke with a minimum of effort and the maximum of effect. What constitutes the strength of Tilden and of Borotra is the fact that immediately their stroke is played they think

of the following stroke, of returning to the center of the ground, that is, to flee the environs of the sideline and to remain indifferent to the charms of the half-volley, a siren concealing a rock against which the best players founder.

To serve, all the great players place themselves just behind the baseline as near as possible to the center of the court. It is from that position that Patterson and Tilden bring off their "cannon ball" services; it is from there that one's service can be placed with the greatest effectiveness. It is essential, in short, not to go far away from the center of the baseline. Near the edge of the court one may, perhaps, succeed with cross-court services directed to the sidelines, but one diminishes the effectiveness of the services that are placed in the neighborhood of the center line. Above all there is the liability of being unable to take a well-placed return.

It is much more difficult to define the best position for returning the service because each player places himself more or less differently. Tilden places himself extremely far away, beyond the baseline, Borotra and Johnston more or less astride the baseline, Cochet and Williams one or two yards inside the court. To choose between these positions, the best method of pro-

cedure for a beginner is to try them all. He may also reflect a little; the nearer he places himself to the service line, the less time he will have to execute his return; he must not copy a Cochet or a Williams unless he has very quick reflex actions and a fairly short movement which he can execute briskly and which will allow him to strike a rising ball.

On the contrary, the further he goes beyond the baseline the more time he will have to return the ball: a player who is somewhat slow, and who strikes the ball with a very complete movement, will have to make up his mind to keep fairly far away. Naturally certain considerations of a technical nature may intervene: a player who wishes to press the opponent, who wishes to take position at the net, should sometimes keep nearer the service line than indicated by his method of stroke execution. On the contrary, a player who would be capable of taking the service very close, but who does not seek to take the adversary by speed, will be wise to place himself rather far away.

Tilden, Cochet, Johnston, Borotra are all in agreement on one point: they all keep more or less exactly on the bisection of the angle formed by the projection on the ground of the two best

placed services, the one to the right, the other to the left, that their adversary can succeed in bringing off. As one is nearly always more sure of his returns in forehand play than of his returns in backhand play, one generally places oneself to the left of this bisection: a player should never move far away from there if he wishes to avoid being compelled to allow a rapid and well-placed ball to pass without reaching it. Once the ball is in play, the service executed and returned, how should the player place himself on the court? He should first of all decide if he wishes, at the next stroke, to execute a volley or to wait until the ball has rebounded in order to return it.

If it is desired to execute a volley the player must rush as quickly as possible to the net. What constitutes the effectiveness of a volley is the playing of it as near as possible to the net. The two volley players most difficult to beat, Jean Borotra and Henri Cochet, execute the majority of their volleys by striking the ball immediately it passes the net. On proceeding towards the net to take a volley, one must not stop to wait for the ball as soon as one has passed the service line, but should continue to advance until the ball is struck, and even afterwards. In many photo-

graphs the impression is given that Borotra, executing a volley, has flung himself forward with such impetuosity that he will not be capable of stopping before reaching the net.

One sole consideration should sometimes lessen the ardor of the player who rushes to the net: the danger of a lob well played. That is why it is absolutely necessary, in order to become a formidable volleyer, to know how to smash well to dispose of the danger of the lob, and to be audacious so as to know how to despise it.

An attempt should always be made, once at the net, to finish the point at the first stroke. However, it is not always possible to succeed in putting the ball outside the reach of the adversary.

After having played a first volley, choice should be made of a position for awaiting the return of the adversary. It is naturally necessary to return as quickly as possible to the center of the court on the line which separates the two squares of the service. The player must not place himself quite close to the net because he would be at the mercy of the least lob, nor must he drop back to the line of service. The best base of operations for playing at the net obviously depends on the quality of your smash,

but it should never be more than two yards from the net. Naturally as soon as one is certain of not being lobbed, that the ball has left the racquet of the adversary almost horizontally, one must again step forward in order to play the volley as effectively as possible. At the net the player must always be in movement, launched forward, then back, towards the right, and towards the left.

Much more than the position of the volley player, that of the baseline player is the object of discussion. Tilden places himself about a yard or two behind the baseline, Johnston and Borotra just behind the latter, whereas Cochet and Williams are fond of placing themselves on the baseline itself or even inside. Naturally, as the same technical and tactical considerations arise, there is a close relationship between the manner in which a player places himself to take the service and the way he places himself in the course of a rally.

Tilden places himself far away because he takes low balls well, because he is afraid if he places himself nearer that he will not have the time to execute a very complete movement correctly, and because he seeks, rather than to hurry his opponent, to put him in difficulty by the very

qualities of his stroke, namely, accuracy, length, pace and spin.

Johnston places himself nearer because he strikes a rising ball more easily than a low ball, because he has very quick reflexes which allow him to find the time to execute rapidly a movement which is still more complete than that of Tilden; because, moreover, he invariably seeks to overwhelm his adversary with speed. Borotra also places himself nearer than Tilden because, disdaining every technical consideration, he wishes at all costs to reach the net rapidly, and because in starting from a nearer point he saves time.

Cochet and Williams, as well as the young Australian champion, Crawford, place themselves still nearer because a very short action and quick reflexes allow them to execute their stroke in a minimum of time; because, being very daring, they are always seeking to press their adversary at all costs; finally, also, because this advance position allows them to reach any ball without the necessity of much movement on the court.

As technique progresses and the demand for a faster game grows, the player places himself always farther forward in back-court play.

However, the position of a Cochet on the court is as far forward as possible. A further advance and the player is within the "forbidden zone." Sometimes the player places himself to play a stroke between the baseline and the service line, but one should never, once the ball is struck, remain there. Many of the balls struck by the adversary fall there, and if position is taken in the forbidden zone it is necessary to take the ball either on low volley or on half-volley, that is, immediately before or after it has touched the ground.

A low volley is a more difficult stroke and less effective than a volley executed sooner by the same player placed a few feet forward.

The half-volley, although the most brilliant stroke possible of execution, is nevertheless the most difficult and the most uncertain. It is difficult to strike the ball correctly because it is more difficult to follow it with the eye than in the execution of any other stroke. The least false bound and the half-volley is a failure. Brought off in spite of difficulties, a half-volley is rarely a very effective stroke, because it is not possible to strike accurately a ball which is taken so low.

From the technical point of view the designation "half-volley" is badly applied to the par-

ticular stroke which it defines. A half-volley has nothing in common with a volley. It is simply a forehand stroke or a backhand stroke executed by striking the ball almost instantly after the bound. A half-volley can be executed exactly like a forehand stroke or a backhand stroke in striking the ball, but this is the most risky way of playing this shot.

The majority of players, for the purpose of executing a half-volley, content themselves by opposing the racquet to the ball and inclining it slightly so that the ball starts suitably forward again. A half-volley should never be undercut. Lifting should be avoided, the ball being struck flat for preference when it is impossible to avoid executing a half-volley. Vincent, Richards and Cochet execute admirable half-volleys. It is by no means rare to see their opponents, who merely expected a defensive stroke, surprised by a ball relatively fast and well placed. But the half-volley never really pays the player who is much addicted to it. It should only be played when *in extremis*.

It is not always possible to be well placed on a tennis court. To take a fast ball, a short ball when at the back of the court, or a lob when at the net, it is often necessary to start off so

rapidly that one finds oneself, once the ball is struck, in a very bad position. The most pressing danger must always be warded off and one must not fear, in order to play a more effective stroke, to find oneself afterwards, like Tilden or Borotra, several yards outside the court. But it is also necessary to think of the following stroke and to come back as rapidly as possible close to the net, or behind the baseline, in any case in the center of the court, to avoid the risk of being outpaced by a fast shot placed on the sideline.

The majority of players, because they have a forehand stroke which is more effective than their backhand, place themselves slightly to the left of the line which separates the court into two equal parts. Anderson in the course of a rally almost always awaits his adversary's reply posted in the left corner of the court. He is successful because he always makes a point of attacking and forcing his opponent never to return balls other than relatively slow, but, each time his opponent can attack, Anderson finds himself at the mercy of a well-placed stroke.

Instead of constantly relying on his best stroke, a player will find it an advantage to endeavor to cultivate his worst stroke, because it will rapidly become effective. When I com-

menced to play tennis my forehand stroke was much superior to my backhand stroke. Then my backhand became my best stroke. This was brought about by assiduous practice.

I have seldom tried to play a forehand stroke instead of a backhand stroke, or a backhand stroke instead of a forehand stroke. To-day, because I make a point of always placing myself exactly in the middle of the court, I have the good fortune to possess a backhand stroke and a forehand stroke which, if they are less effective than many others, have the merit of being equal in value.

Richards' Smash

Richards was both deadly, when he had to kill a short lob, and very reliable in sending back a lob in overhead play. Notice how the body weight is transferred from the right on to the left foot.

CHAPTER XI

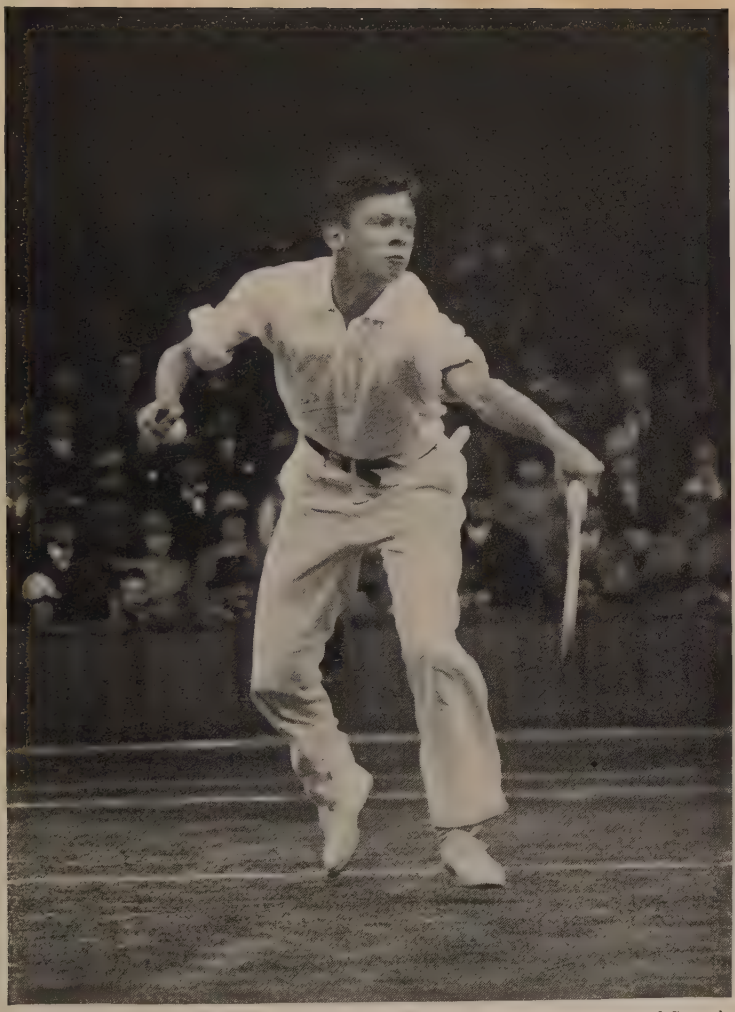
CHOICE OF TACTICS

On a tennis court it is the racquet which strikes the ball, it is the arm which carries the racquet forward, but it is the brain which directs the control of the movement and decides from where and how to play each stroke; it is on the character that the intensity and effect of physical and intellectual effort, success or non-success, depend. To understand the real beauty of tennis, it is necessary to see, beyond the sometimes stereotyped actions of the players, not only the activity of the brain in the execution of the strokes but the intellectual effort, the nervous tension, in the struggle for supremacy.

A tennis match is a combat; to win it a player must be a good soldier and a good general at one and the same time. One must first become a good soldier; one must learn to execute the principal tennis strokes and to place oneself well on the court. By dint of repeating the same actions, more or less rapidly, according to what is commonly termed his address, a player

should create in his intellect associations of ideas or images which, whenever he decides to play a certain stroke, should ensure the execution by the play of reflexes immediately released. In the same way one should succeed, without thinking about it, in always placing oneself correctly for serving, taking service, etc., in always coming back mechanically to the center of the ground just as if drawn there by some magnetic force.

All that is the task of a soldier, but, as on a field of battle, it is the best general who wins rather than the best soldiers. So on a court it is not necessarily the best executed strokes which ensure success but those which are the most intelligently utilized. As soon as his execution can dispense with his attentions, as soon as it has become more or less automatic, the tennis player should concentrate his entire attention, all his intelligence, on finding the best way of utilizing his execution to ensure victory. As soon as he has triumphed over the control of his muscles and the malignant obstinacy which makes the ball behave otherwise than he desires, he must confront a still more rugged task: he must prepare the plan which will enable him to dominate another player, to resist a force similar to his own, to vanquish all the methods of attack which



Sport and General

BACKHAND VOLLEY (BOUSSUS)

hazard and the will of his adversary may accumulate.

It is not one of the least attractions of tennis that any one who studies the tactics of the principal champions may find therein a method, a variation and a diversity at least as extraordinary as that which appears in the stroke execution of the same players. If there be a dozen ways of executing each tennis stroke correctly, there are a hundred ways, all of them different, of conducting a match.

To win a match one may simply choose to set oneself to returning the ball over the net like Gordon Lowe or the Indian player, Sleem; one may strike each ball with all one's force like Washer; or prepare, like Cochet, by short and cross-court shots, prolonged attacks which will ultimately permit one to finish the point at the net; or rush forward as soon as possible, take up a forcing position at the net like Borotra; or on the contrary, like Tilden, from the base of the court, return each ball in a different manner, and oblige one's adversaries to solve a veritable "puzzle."

Superficially the best players in modern tennis may be classified in three groups:

The first group comprises all the players, gen-

erally calm, cold and patient, who, for lack of daring, only defend themselves, whether it be by contenting themselves like Gordon Lowe with returning the attacks of their adversaries, or whether it be that they set themselves to increase, by the manner of their return, the risks taken by their adversary who is desirous of putting the ball out of their reach quickly.

The defense adopted by Colonel Mayes and by the Anglo-Indian Jacob is more difficult to penetrate than Gordon Lowe's, because these two players set themselves to place their strokes accurately enough to oblige their adversaries to run a great deal, often to execute a backhand stroke when they would like to execute a forehand stroke.

The German champion, Froitzheim, the Dane Petersen, and the Dutchman Timmer never take the initiative in the attack, so to speak, but play a fairly safe game, and only counter-attack whenever their adversary makes a mistake.

Finally, the Japanese Shimidzu, the Count de Gomar, the American Wallace Johnson, the young English player Austin, the professional Kozeluh, if they do not hit hard enough, if they do not take position at the net readily enough to be ranged amongst the players who attack, con-

front their adversaries with a defense so varied and so intelligent, interspersed with rapid counter-attacks, that it becomes as dangerous as a vigorous attack.

In a second group may be classed all the players generally energetic and impatient, daring, fast and powerful, rather than merely resistant players, who attack unceasingly.

Some attack from the base of the court without venturing near the net more often than Gordon Lowe or Wallace Johnson. Others, on the contrary, post themselves at the net in a most persistent manner.

Striking every ball with all his strength, bringing off magnificent forehand strokes, but committing, especially when obliged to resort to backhand play, many errors, Washer is the perfect model of the player attacking from the back of the court. I have never seen the professional Najuch in play, but from what I have heard about him he can be put side by side with Washer.

The Australian Anderson is also a baseline player who attacks unceasingly, striking each ball with all his strength, bringing off wonderful forehand strokes, avoiding backhand play as much as possible and rarely coming up to the net.

No other player so much as Borotra deserves to be chosen as the model of aggressive players who are not at their best until they come close to the net. There is no player who executes so seldom as he does a defensive stroke, who neglects more rarely an opportunity to take position at the net, to try to force the ball beyond the reach of his adversary from his very first volley.

In the third group must be classed all the players, who, naturally, would have found a place in one of the first two groups, but who have succeeded, by dint of work, either in imparting to their play the sting which it lacked, or in ensuring the perfection of their execution in order not to be helpless when they had to meet the attack of their adversaries and defend themselves.

The majority of great players belong to this group, illustrated by Tilden, Johnston, Kingscote, Cochet, Albert Burke, Alonso, de Morpurgo, to which Borotra, making his baseline play more and more sure, will soon belong, and to which I do not despair to belong one day.

Tilden, in a match, defends himself much more than he attacks, and is never so happy as when his opponent takes the offensive, strikes hard or plays at the net. However, frequently he tries decisive strokes, either in driving or in serving,

and comes up readily to the net every time he has occasion to do so.

Johnston is more at ease when he attacks than when he defends. Cochet is much more dangerous when he attacks at the net than when he defends himself from the back of the court. Burke, Alonso and de Morpurgo are baseline players much more than volleyers. However, each of these players, whilst letting themselves generally follow the tactics natural to them, mix attacking strokes and defensive strokes, the strokes which mark an initiative and those which are only replies. They are always much more difficult to beat than the players who are always attacking, or those who only defend themselves. The players who execute every stroke correctly are obviously more difficult to beat than those who execute one stroke admirably and another badly.

It is extremely difficult to guide the choice of a young player when he seeks, amongst all the champions he sees playing or whose play he hears described, the particular player whose tactics he should copy.

Like a general, who, before drawing up a plan, must first of all review his troops so as to know what his resources will be during the battle, a young tennis player, before choosing to attack

or defend himself, to play from the back of the court or from the net, should gauge the effectiveness of his various strokes. It is quite obvious that if, in spite of his efforts to create a complete game for himself, he has an excellent forehand stroke, a good backhand stroke, but a bad volley, he must not seek to imitate the methods of a Borotra.

An ambitious player, apart from his execution, should analyze his physical and intellectual possibilities and character. Tactics are not satisfactory unless adapted to the means of the person who puts them into execution, unless they allow him fully to develop his personality. It is not the tactics of Borotra in themselves which make him the admirable player he is, but the fact that they enable him to take advantage of his rapidity of mind, of quick decision, of his daring, or even his courage. What makes the force of Cochet is that he has succeeded in choosing a manner of conducting his matches which turns to account the rapidity of his reflexes, a very sure judgment, and a sense of the best reply which never fails.

Materially by allowing himself to be guided by the characteristics of his execution, mentally by letting himself be guided by his character, a

young player should first of all seek to choose the tactics which appear the most natural for him. If he is naturally inclined to attack too much or to take up his residence, as it were, in a passive defense, he should take it on himself to work with a view to endeavoring to join the group of the Tildens and Johnstons.

He will then have to take into consideration that the conditions under which he will play will often be different and that each of the opponents he is to meet will have a way of his own of conducting a match.

The majority of tennis champions vary their execution but little. With the exception of Tilden and a few others, the majority of great players almost always execute each of their strokes in the same way. From the tactical point of view, on the contrary, a player should first of all endeavor to adopt tactics which, mixing the attacking and defensive strokes, utilizing all the possibilities of a game without weakness, will be the best against any adversary. But he must afterwards ensure a certain flexibility in his methods according to the circumstances under which the match takes place and the peculiarities of the adversary he meets.

Tennis is played on wood, on clay, on cement,

as well as on turf, as in the early days of tennis. A player who stays at the back of the court when he plays on clay should not convert himself into a volleyer as soon as he plays on a wooden court or a turf court. It should always be remembered that wood is a faster playing surface than cement, and that grass is a surface on which the balls bound with more pace than on clay. One should always as much as possible, from the back of the court or from the net, attack more when playing on wood than when playing on grass, or when playing on turf as against playing on a clay court. Whatever may be the surface of a court on which I play, I remain a baseline player, more expert in defending myself than in attacking. However, I hit harder, make a point of coming to the net more frequently, when I play on wood or on grass than when I play on a clay court.

The high or low temperature, the dryness or humidity of a court, gives more value each in turn to the attack and the defense. I detest playing on a damp court, because the ball does not rebound enough and it is difficult then to pass a player at the net—moral: when you play on a damp court, play at the net! A good player should, before a match, neglect no observation

which might allow him to define with precision the details and the shades of the general plan which he has decided always to follow.

One of the principal reasons of the superiority of Tilden is the manner with which he knows how to shade his tactics, giving, each in turn, according to his adversaries, all his care to his attacking strokes or, on the contrary, to his purely defensive strokes.

In the last match which I played against him in America, he modified his tactics in each set, attacking from the back of the court in the first set, coming more to the net in the second set, and contenting himself with defense in the third set. In each set he gained the advantage at first, but, probably solely due to a physical condition inferior to my own, he was unable to win any.

In the semi-final of the Championship of America, in 1926, I owed the beating of Cochet to tactics entirely new to me. During the two first sets, playing from the back of the court in accordance with my custom, I was constantly dominated. At the beginning of the third set, risking all for all, I attacked by coming constantly to the net. I did not play particularly well at the net on that day. If I conducted all

my matches as I played the end of this one I should not win often, but experience proved that it was better for me to play badly at the net, to oblige Cochet to play worse at the back of the court, than to play well at the back of the court and allow him to play better at the net.

Generally speaking, to adapt one's tactics to those of one's adversary does not mean that one should sacrifice one's usual methods to tactics specially conceived for bothering him. But it is always necessary, on a tennis court, within the limits permitted by the variety of one's execution and the flexibility of one's tactics, to make a point of playing each stroke so as to render the task of the opponent as difficult as possible.

The first principle of tennis is to place oneself in the conditions which seem the most natural for playing. The second is to compel the adversary, whilst respecting approximately the obligations of the first principle, to always have to reply under the most unfavorable conditions.

CHAPTER XII

SERVICE AND RETURN

On the court a tennis player, every time that he strikes the ball, should not have to think at all of the manner in which he executes his stroke, but should set himself to strike the ball automatically, in such manner as to aid as much as possible the realization of the general plan which he has adopted before the match.

Whatever tactics may be chosen, whatever may be the conditions under which the match takes place, and whoever the adversary against whom one plays, one should always endeavor to utilize the service in as aggressive a manner as possible. The majority of players strike their first service ball with all their strength, imparting the greatest possible speed to it. Tilden regularly wins one or two points in each service game by succeeding in placing the ball out of the reach of his adversary. In 1925 I was one day crushed three sets to none by Patterson because on that particular occasion he succeeded with an extraordinary number of winning services which I saw pass without time to make a movement.

To hit hard is not the only way of putting a first service ball beyond the reach of the adversary. In the first match I played against Tilden, in Philadelphia in 1925, I brought off as many winning services as he did by placing, from time to time, my first service, with a sharp and quick swing, on the forehand of my adversary, who was expecting a sliced ball on his backhand. Vincent Richards does not impart an extreme speed to the ball, but he very often succeeds in bringing off winning services because he strikes the ball with a very short swing, which does not allow the direction of his stroke to be guessed beforehand.

The second service ball is rarely fast enough to bound beyond the reach of the adversary. One should always endeavor, however, to displace the adversary, to compel him to move, in order to prevent him from assuming the attack. To serve an easy second ball against Cochet or Borotra means resigning oneself to lose the point. They will play a fast stroke which will be very difficult to return, and you would not be able in any case to return in such manner that they cannot immediately execute a decisive volley. Service should be placed as often as possible in such way as to compel the adversary to

play his least effective stroke. Serving from the left court, at 15-love for instance, nearly always one should serve on the backhand of the adversary. On the contrary, serving from the right court, the ball should not be placed on the center-line unless there is a reasonable certainty of imparting to it sufficient speed to prevent the opponent having the time to move and take the ball on the forehand. Against Cochet, however, it is better, when serving from the right side, to serve down the court on to his forehand rather than attempt to serve in the center on his backhand. To serve on his backhand is to execute the stroke he is expecting, to enable him, by rapidly changing his position, to execute a very fast forehand stroke which he will follow to the net under the best possible conditions. On the contrary, it is safer to serve on his forehand even though you enable him to play a forehand stroke effortlessly, because it compels him to go away from the center of the court in order to take the ball, and thus have to cover a longer distance to take position at the net. This plan will generally oblige him to remain at the back of the court or to increase one's chances to pass him if he takes the risk of coming to the net.

One should always endeavor to satisfy oneself

when a manner of placing one's service so as to trouble the opponent has been found. It is necessary to know how to judge if an adversary will be particularly bothered by the stroke which will surprise him or by that which he expects under the impression that he is going to miss it. Every time that I play against Tilden I set myself, on the right court, to serve a short ball on his forehand. In proportion as our matches are prolonged he misses more and more returns. On the contrary, when I play against Borotra I make a point of always varying the manner in which I place my service. If I serve several times following in the same way, he immediately executes returns which are very difficult to take. It is not always the fastest and the best placed services which are the most difficult to take. I have never played against Shimidzu, but all those who have met him have almost always been reduced simply to putting back the ball into play in order to take a service slow in appearance, in reality admirably placed and varied in length. A player should always try every possible way of bothering the adversary. Sometimes a tall player like Gobert, who easily takes the most rapid and the best played services, will be incapable of returning a ball directed straight at

him, and falling in the center of the service court.

When, instead of remaining in the neighborhood of the baseline, position is immediately taken at the net, effort should be made, more than ever, to reduce the adversary to a defensive return. Richards, Patterson, Brugnon, when they wish to follow their service to the net, strike the ball with all their strength. Many players who habitually follow their service to the net do not seek to serve a very fast ball at all, but, on the contrary, a slow ball, because they particularly want to find the time to come very near the net. Naturally they place their service on the weak side of the adversary or sometimes near the center-line because they thus reduce the danger, which they fear most of all, of the short and cross-court return of service.

Borotra, who follows second and first ball to the net almost indifferently, serves nearly always close to the center-line, but especially on the right side. On the left side he varies this by serving, occasionally, on the backhand of his adversary, but mostly he goes for the center-line.

After the service, it is the return of the service that is the most important stroke in the course of a match. It is advisable always to bear in mind, when trying to define the manner which

is the most effective for returning a service, not only the effectiveness of the service of the adversary, but also the manner in which he utilizes his service in his general tactics; in particular, entirely different returns must be executed against two players both of whom may be serving in the same way, but one staying at the back of the court once his service is executed, whilst the other immediately takes position near the net.

When returning the service of an adversary who follows his service regularly at the net, the striker out should make an attacking stroke at all costs. However fast and well placed may be the service of his adversary he must strike the ball as high and as hard as possible, give it as much speed as can possibly be given to it, and make it follow an extremely low trajectory, passing close to the net. Any return slow or high above the net enables the adversary to execute a decisive volley with considerable certainty. The return of service which is the easiest to execute against the player who follows his service to the net is a cross-court return, a forehand stroke directed to the forehand stroke of the adversary, or a backhand stroke placed on the backhand of the adversary on the left side of the court. That is the stroke most likely to be

Henri Manuel

VINCENT RICHARDS SERVING

successful. This stroke is also very effective because if it does not pass outside the reach of the adversary it falls in almost every case very near the net, and cannot be taken except on a low volley or half-volley. It is the fear of the cross-court return which leads the majority of players who follow their service to the net to place their ball near the center-line.

When I play against an adversary who follows his service to the net, Brugnon or Borotra for example, I make a point of striking the ball very early and as high as possible. When I play a cross-court stroke I do not strike the ball too hard, but from time to time I vary this with a stroke along the line which I strike with all my strength. Account should be taken, always, of the manner in which a player places his return, of the manner in which the player who serves habitually places his volleys. For example, against Borotra, who plays nearly all his volleys along the lines and usually deep, a cross-court return is better than a fast return directed along the sideline, because it exposes the player who has just executed his return less to the danger of being taken on the wrong foot. On the contrary, against Paul Feret or Richards, who generally place their volleys across the court, I have

always noticed that it was less dangerous to return the service along the lines than to hit across the court.

The chief point to remember is that a return against a player who follows his service to the net, should always be as aggressive as possible. One must also make a point of varying one's returns. It is not a question here of always playing the same stroke on the pretext that the adversary is thus put into difficulties: as soon as the adversary guesses the manner in which you return his service he is almost sure to attempt to execute a decisive volley. There must be no fear, from time to time, of moving in order to execute an aggressive forehand stroke when one might have returned the ball with a backhand stroke. But then, as always, it must be remembered that it is not permissible to neglect the principles which determine the best position of a player on the court, except in so far as a decisive or almost decisive stroke is essential.

When your adversary does not follow his service to the net, you must first, before deciding how you will return the ball, judge the effectiveness of his service. If the service which you have to return is very difficult, what you will be able to do best will be to execute a deep return,

but not very fast nor placed quite close to the lines. You must not take any unnecessary risk. Against an adversary who serves well and remains at the back of the court, like Tilden for example, I content myself almost always with returning a ball which passes rather high above the net, falls two or three yards in front of the baseline, placed close enough to the sideline to oblige the adversary to execute a backhand stroke.

On the contrary, if the adversary's service is weak do not fear to execute a fast return and an aggressive one. You may, once the stroke is played, either remain at the back of the court or take up position at the net. When it is decided to remain at the back of the court, an effort must be made to play the stroke which is the most apt to create an opening that can be then exploited. A fairly short cross-court stroke is, from this point of view, nearly always preferable to a stroke along the line. However, the player must never neglect to attack the weak point of the adversary, which is nearly always his backhand. When I play from the back of the court against a baseline player, almost always, from the left side, I place my returns on his backhand and from the right side, I alternate cross-

court returns on his forehand, very fast ones, and long and straight returns which compel him to return the ball with his backhand. Exactly as in the case of serving, it is necessary to know at what point to exploit an attack which has bothered the adversary and to recognize, on the contrary, the right moment to vary it. It is not in placing his returns always as near as possible to the sideline which is on the left of his adversary that a player succeeds in compelling him to make the greatest possible number of backhand strokes, because his adversary, being warned, will change his position in order to take the ball with a forehand stroke every time that your stroke is not perfectly placed. To attack the backhand of the adversary as effectively as possible, it is necessary to play fairly often on his forehand stroke so as not to allow him to anticipate your attack and counteract it without great effort.

If you play well at the net you must not hesitate to attack vigorously an easy service and to come up to the net. One may endeavor, by the length, the rapidity and the precision of one's return, to compel the adversary to confine himself to playing a defensive stroke only, which it will be easy to take at the net and to return in decisive fashion. One may also, exactly as in

serving, exploit the center theory so as to place a ball almost in the center of the court in such a way as to prevent the adversary from successfully bringing off a dangerous cross-court passing shot. Cochet, when he follows a return to the net, invariably places it a good deal, ignoring the center theory. On the contrary, Borotra frequently returns the service of his adversary to the center of the court before taking position at the net.

I do not believe at all in the effectiveness of a slow return placed in the center of a court, but I do believe that the best manner of returning a fairly easy service, whether one remains at the back of the court or whether one comes up afterwards to take position at the net, is to strike the ball with all one's strength without precisely seeking to place it exactly in the center of the court, but avoiding in any case seeking to place it near the lines, and placing some reliance on the speed of your shot.

I believe more and more in the effectiveness of the powerful, fast return, but not overplaced, because it may be executed with little risk and is a stroke which compels the adversary, even more than with a placed stroke, to return a ball which will be easy to place beyond his reach.

CHAPTER XIII

NET PLAY

In the course of a rally, more than in serving or in returning the service, the choice is offered of many ways of playing and placing a stroke.

When one is at the back of the court and the adversary is at the net, one must not hesitate for long: the ball must be struck as early as possible on the rise and the most aggressive stroke must be executed. A ball must be played which is deep and fast along the sideline, beyond the adversary's reach, or a short diagonal ball which passes close to the net and falls at his feet. Naturally it is a question of seeing, when one plays against a volleyer, if he executes better or worse a forehand volley than a backhand volley and of always obliging him to play his worst stroke. Your adversary would quickly anticipate the direction of your stroke, and for a good volleyer at the net an anticipated stroke usually signifies a point lost to his adversary placed at the back of the court. It is necessary, therefore, to

endeavor to vary the direction of the strokes that one plays in order to place the ball outside the reach of a volleyer, or put him in difficulties. Tilden, although he places himself very far behind the baseline and strikes the ball always very low, admirably defends himself against the best volleyers because he varies the direction of his strokes enormously, as he alternates finesse strokes and forcing strokes. He compels the adversary sometimes to take a ball which dies on his racquet, close to the ground, sometimes a ball to which a prodigious speed is imparted, which one scarcely ventures to attempt to reach.

It is necessary to know—and this varies with different opponents—if it is better to play from side to side or to play twice to the same side to take the opponent on the wrong foot. There are players, Borotra for example, who always return to the center of the court immediately they have played their stroke. If the ball be placed twice running in the same spot, they are often surprised and cannot return in time to the place from where they have just played, whence they had moved away as rapidly as possible. Against Cochet, for example, it is necessary certainly, from time to time, to try to take him on the wrong foot, since he returns very slowly to the

center of the court, never hurrying himself. Rather than play twice on the same side, it is much often better for example to play one stroke to the right and the next stroke to the left.

Whenever a baseline player finds out that his adversary, placed at the net, is able to return the stroke, which he has just played, in a very aggressive manner, he should, instead of remaining motionless in the center of the ground, try to guess on what side the ball will be placed. It is so easy to put a ball that may be returned with a smash or a high volley outside the reach of an adversary that the majority of players form certain habits in the manner of placing their strokes. If a player studies the play of his opponent well, he will be capable often of anticipating the direction of his "kills." An anticipated smash is not always, certainly, a returned smash, but such anticipation may often prove helpful. There have been occasions when the tide of the battle has turned on what might have been regarded as a hopeless retrieving effort.

To render the task of the player installed at the net as difficult as possible, the drives and the lobs must be alternated. Out of the four strokes played when his adversary is at the net, Tilden

JOHNSTON'S FOREHAND VOLLEY

At the net, as at the back of the court, Johnston strikes the ball with a longer swing than most players. He imparts also a great deal of undercut spin to the ball.

executes one lob at least. The lob is very often the sole means of saving a point when one could not play a fast stroke outside the reach of a player placed very close to the net. It is also, sometimes, the means of gaining the point without his being able to reach the ball. Finally, and above all, to lob often is the only way of compelling the volleyer, fearing a lob each time he comes to the net, not to place himself too near the net, to remain far enough away for one to have some chance of passing him or of playing at his feet. If the lob did not exist no baseline player could beat Borotra, because he would place himself right on the net and would intercept all the strokes of his adversaries.

When one has to return, from the back of the court, a drive which has not been followed to the net, it is not absolutely necessary to execute a very fast stroke placed with a deal of risk. If the opponent's ball is very fast and if, in particular, it is well placed, and if, in order to take it, one is obliged to proceed far from the center of the court, it is excellent to return without risk a slow and long ball which passes high above the net and is just well enough placed to compel the opponent to execute a backhand stroke, which he generally does not like. Every time that

Tilden plays a stroke which is very difficult for me to take, instead of trying to return him a fast shot I execute a sort of half-lob placed on his backhand. As he always takes the ball late, at the end of its bound, he is obliged to get back a good deal, and I have thus the time to return to the center of the court, and get in position easily to take the most rapid shot which he can play. The first time that I succeeded in beating Washer, at Nice, instead of replying to his powerful drives by other drives more or less rapid and placed I made a point of returning slow and long undercut balls to him. I finally won in the fifth set, aided, it is true, by the state of the court, which, being very damp, made my undercut balls more difficult to take.

When the adversary's stroke is not difficult to return, one should always endeavor to execute a forcing stroke of some kind. Nine times out of ten when the opportunity offers to attack from the back of the court, the best stroke which you can execute is a long and fast drive, placed on the backhand of your adversary.

The majority of good tennis players direct two or three of their strokes towards their right, to oblige their adversary to play backhand. That is why there are so many more players

who play well from the left court in doubles, and accurately return the services towards their right, whilst there are few good right court players.

The backhand of the adversary must be attacked: that always pays, but it pays especially if the adversary, every time that it is possible to place a ball in such manner that he would have to return it with a backhand stroke, is compelled to play a backhand stroke instead of stepping round it. That is why one must, from time to time, play on his forehand to prevent him from closing up his backhand corner and thus leaving the forehand court too open. It also pays sometimes directly to attack the forehand of an adversary either that he may miss his stroke because he has been surprised, or that, accustomed to attacking every time that he plays a forehand stroke, he does not know how to execute a defensive stroke so well, in reply to a vigorous attack.

When he met and beat Cochet at St. Cloud, in 1927, Tilden played much more often on the forehand stroke than on the backhand stroke of Cochet, in order to force his adversary to open out his backhand court. Then, when he pressed for his point, he forced Cochet to execute a backhand stroke every time that he placed his ball in

the left corner of the Lyons man's court. Moreover, Cochet, who was accustomed to seeing his adversaries endeavoring to place the ball on his backhand, and not to play on his forehand except when they were forced, appeared greatly worried when he had to use for defensive purposes a stroke to which he habitually resorts for attack.

A player should place his shots very differently, aggressive or defensive, according to the game of the adversary against whom he plays. Against a good volleyer, impatiently awaiting the opportunity of coming to the net, it is necessary to try and play as long as possible, to hit hard rather than to place a great deal. Every time that Borotra or Cochet fails to follow the stroke that they have just played to the net, I make a point of returning the ball as far as possible by striking it fairly hard and without overplacing it: this is the best means of keeping them as long as possible at the back of the court, of preventing them from coming to take position at the net.

On the contrary, when playing against a player who does not know how to or who does not like to execute a volley, one must alternate the long balls, well placed, and the short and crossed balls, because that compels the opponent to run

much more than in taking balls which are always long. Also, one often succeeds from time to time in surprising him half-way from the net and in placing the ball out of his reach. I won my first singles match in the Davis Cup in 1923 against de Gomar by alternating long balls and short balls, attracting the Spanish champion to the net, then to pass him or lob him easily, or by obliging him, every time that, after having taken a short ball, he dared not come to the net, to tire himself greatly by getting back precipitately.

One cannot always win from the back of the court. Any time that it is necessary to take a short ball, there must be no fear of coming close to the net. Every time that one has executed an extremely fast and well-placed stroke, that it is certain that the adversary will only be able to play a defensive stroke; every time that sufficient time offers for reaching very close to the net before the ball struck by the adversary returns, position should be taken at the net. To miss an opportunity of coming to the net is voluntarily to lose the benefit of preparatory work which it will surely be necessary to recommence.

When one knows that one's play is much better at the net than at the back of the court, when a decision has been taken to go up to the net as

frequently as possible, an effort must be made to compel the adversary to play rather short; then to hit his return as hard as possible and rush to the net. Cochet, better than any other player, prepares his incursions to the net. He takes the ball very early, which lessens the distance to be covered to reach close to the net; he imparts a lot of speed and length to his stroke, and above all he places it with an extraordinary precision. Cochet makes a point of seeking out the weak points of his adversaries. As soon as he notices that his adversary's backhand play is defective, for example, once, twice, ten times following he plays a long forehand stroke into the left corner of the half-court of his adversary and comes up to the net. If it is important to pass an adversary at the net from the back of the court it is equally necessary to accustom oneself to varying the direction of the strokes which one follows to the net. When the ball has been placed several times running in the same place and your adversary has never succeeded in executing a good return, you must profit by the disagreeable impression which will not fail to worry him every time that you follow a well-placed stroke in the same manner and bring off a decisive volley. Contrary to what is generally supposed, it is not at the be-

ginning of the match that a volleyer accumulates the points. It is at the end of a match, when it gets on the nerves of his adversary always to have to play the same stroke under conditions which are always difficult and always imposed. When he plays a fifth set Borotra succeeds almost always in winning. Certainly he is less rapid and less "in wind" than at the beginning of the match, he brings off less decisive blows than in the first set, but his adversary is obsessed with the fear of putting the ball within his reach, and returns it much more often into the net.

When he wants to come up to the net, Borotra, instead of placing his ball either to the right or to the left, often directs it straight in front of him so that it falls in the center of the court. It is certainly necessary to avoid coming to the net after having played a short or cross-court stroke, but in my opinion it is scarcely easier, as is claimed, to pass the adversary when returning a long ball placed near one corner than when returning a ball which falls very near the middle of the baseline. It is not, however, bad tactics when one wishes to come to the net, or even when it is desired to stay at the back of the court, to play in the center of the court, because that is much less difficult than bringing off a very well placed

stroke, and allows one to impart greater speed to the ball.

Beaten in 1926 by Harada and by Johnston, I beat the same two players, who were, it is true, in less good form, in 1927, because I made a point of striking very hard without placing much.

Once at the net there must be no hesitation: the ball must be put at all costs outside the reach of the adversary; a defensive stroke must never be played, if it can be avoided. Above all, one must know how to place oneself very close to the net. The class of a player at the net is not measured by the manner in which he executes a volley, but by the manner in which he knows how to place himself in order to strike the ball, at the same time, however, being able to protect himself should his adversary lob.

One must not fear when one is close to the net to anticipate the stroke of the adversary. Nearly every player contracts certain habits in his attempts to pass a volleyer. It must be known how to profit by this. If one notes that a certain player consistently seeks to put his backhand stroke outside the reach of an adversary placed at the net, by playing across the court, then he must resolutely place himself on the left in order to cut off the return.

Sport and General

FOREHAND VOLLEY (BOROTRA)

Cochet anticipates marvelously; in fact, he seems to know the intentions of his opponents before they do themselves. There is not a player who places his volleys better: all his low volleys are long and they hardly rebound. Placed most frequently in such manner that they take the adversary on the wrong foot, they can never be returned in a very aggressive manner. As soon as Cochet is given a high ball he draws near to the net and strikes the ball with all his strength, placing it across the court beyond the reach of the fastest player.

At the net one should not seek to attack the "weak point" of the adversary, to place all his volleys in the same place on the pretext that this is, for example, to compel the adversary to play backhand. At the net one must not try to place the adversary in difficulties, but an endeavor should be made to place the ball at the first stroke outside his reach without temporizing, to follow the example of Jean Borotra, who is, without doubt, the best volleyer of modern times.

CHAPTER XIV

SPIN OF THE BALL

"SPIN" is imparted to a tennis ball by striking it in such a manner that it revolves on its own axis at the moment it leaves the racquet.

Spin was in all probability first imparted to a ball quite unintentionally. It is conceivable that a player, surprised and out-maneuvered by a fast ball, in his effort to take it modified both his action and his grip. Instead of striking the ball with a simple direct impact, he struck it in such a way as to cause it to spin round on leaving his racquet, the ball following an unusual trajectory, and the bound reacting to the spin and surface of the court. The effective result thus accidentally attained led him to explore various means of reproducing it. As an outcome, the spin which caused such variations in the trajectory and rebound of the ball came to be utilized to facilitate the task of the player executing the stroke, and to render more difficult that of the opponent negotiating the return; and in consequence cut services, forehand and backhand strokes, cut and lifted, made their appearance.

The trajectory of a tennis ball leaving the racquet which has just struck it is determined by its initial speed and the measure of air resistance. When no spin has been imparted to a ball it is comparatively easy, regard being had to its speed, to anticipate its line of flight in the air (trajectory). On the other hand, if spin be imparted, the problem is complicated by the variations of flight produced when, owing to rotation, the surface of the ball meets on all sides with the same air resistance. The rotation in the air created by the spin induces an added resistance on the whole surface of the ball. Less resistance would be encountered were the ball not revolving on its own axis. It follows, therefore, that the trajectory of a ball which revolves upon its own axis is modified—this modification being the outcome of spin.

The spin imparted to a ball has an effect upon the manner in which it rebounds. The ball at the moment when its surface comes into contact with the ground will rebound with varying force and direction, according to the degree of spin imparted. It will rebound more or less rapidly, and more or less vertically to the right or left. Much of the original spin will be lost immediately the ball touches the ground. Notwith-

standing this, the angle of rebound will be entirely different from the angle described by a ball devoid of spin.

Nearly all modern tennis champions utilize the variations imparted to the trajectory of the ball by spin to increase the margin of safety of their strokes. A good player should impart to his first service, and especially to his second, a spin which accentuates the curvature of the trajectory of the ball, striking the ball hard enough to ensure that there is no loss of speed, without at the same time exceeding the limits of the service court.

The spin imparted to a ball to "improve" its trajectory should never be exaggerated. One brings off more easily a slightly cut service, or a forehand and a backhand stroke which is scarcely lifted, than an exaggerated one. It must be remembered that by the action of imparting spin the stroke is made more difficult of execution (with the exception perhaps of service), and that the chances of keeping the ball within the limits of the court are somewhat lessened.

What has enabled Borotra and Cochet to raise themselves since the war to the foremost rank of tennis players is the fact that they have solved the problem of imparting to the ball,

either from the back of the court or from the net, just the right amount of spin required, losing nothing in speed, and at the same time having perfect control of their strokes, a control that a Gobert of pre-war days lacked. At the cost of a slight additional effort they still maintain their speed and yet do not lift their drives and overcut their volleys as the majority of their rivals do.

It must be borne in mind, when it is desired to ascertain what degree of spin must be imparted to the ball, that it is necessary to expend a lot of energy to make the ball turn briskly, and that the more a ball is cut the less is its initial speed. It is sheer folly on the part of a player who is not too strong and who is not capable of imparting much speed to the ball, and consequently an extended trajectory, to waste part of his limited strength in excessive lifting or cutting of a forehand stroke. It should never be forgotten that speed is the first quality in a stroke.

The majority of players who impart a lot of spin to the ball have not only the desire better to control their stroke but also to increase the difficulties of their opponents in returning it, hoping that they will be deceived by the trajectory and the rebound of the ball. Tennis be-

comes an art when one considers the clever adaptability of a Tilden when he sets himself to give, and succeeds in giving, to the ball that spin which compels his opponent to play his stroke under circumstances which always appear most difficult.

To make the best of a good service which one knows how to deliver by imparting different spins to the ball, it is essential to study first the play of your opponent. In the case of a player who does not like to take a ball with his arm fully extended you should try to serve a ball which goes away from him. On the contrary, in the case of a player who likes striking the ball with arm fully extended one should try to serve a ball which comes in towards him. Again, to a player who likes striking the ball high, a ball which rebounds but little should be served, and a ball which rebounds high to a player who perfers taking low balls.

In an ordinary cut service the ball rebounds toward the right of the player who is seeking to take it, fairly low and fairly far away. This service is especially efficacious against players who are weak on the forehand stroke and against left-handers. It is more effective against players who cut their return than those who lift a great deal. In my opinion, what particularly

constitutes the value of the ordinary cut service is the rebound of the ball, a rebound which is always low and which does not permit the opponent, even when the ball is placed for a forehand stroke, to make a strong aggressive return.

In an ordinary American cut service the ball rebounds very high to the left of the player seeking to take it. This service is very effective against players who are weak on backhand play. Moreover, players who have good backhand strokes are worried by this American service because they have to strike the ball very high and under very difficult conditions.

In order to bring off a good smash the ball must be struck with direct impact (flat), and in order to execute a good volley a ball must be hardly cut at all. It is only from the back of the court that it is advisable to try and defeat the opponent by cut or lifted strokes.

In a forehand or backhand stroke which is very much lifted the ball describes an extremely convex trajectory, falling rapidly after having passed the net, rebounding quickly, high and far. A lifted ball is not troublesome to take from the back of the court, unless it is very fast. On the other hand, a cut ball is always a little difficult to return because it rebounds so little. A cut

ball, owing to its lack of speed, is usually a defensive stroke rather than an attacking one. When a player is beaten by speed in the course of an exchange from baseline to baseline it is advantageous to utilize the cut stroke, as time is gained and the opponent is prevented from striking a low fast return.

Against an opponent in position at the net the cut stroke should never be employed, for it gives him time to place himself and, by reason of the horizontal trajectory followed by the ball, it often enables him to make a winning volley. On the contrary, it is very effective to lift a forehand or backhand stroke played when the opponent is at the net because the speed of the ball is very little diminished and the opponent is forced to take low down a ball which is falling rapidly.

In order to counter the action of the spin of a lifted ball, it is necessary to take the stroke lower than you would if the ball had been struck direct (flat) and, on the contrary, to take the stroke higher to counter the effect of the cut ball. It is comparatively easy to return a lifted ball by lifting, but it is more difficult to cut it. Again, although it is difficult to cut a ball which has been cut by your opponent, it is far more difficult to lift it. The best and safest way to take a ball

with a lot of spin is to strike it with a flat racquet.

The effectiveness of cut and lifted ball should not be exaggerated. A player who grips his racquet firmly and makes a point of following the ball with his eye will have little difficulty in returning a cut or lifted ball. What really creates the effectiveness of the spin is the disconcerting effect it has upon the nerves. To miss a cut ball creates a disagreeable feeling of impotence, and although one knows that the spin is responsible one worries to find a remedy. The effectiveness of Tilden's cut service is not so much that the ball rebounds very low but rather his reputation of serving an almost unplayable ball. Tilden thus acquires a moral ascendancy over his opponents which enables him to make them miss a stroke by reason of a haunting impression in the mind.

Under certain conditions, when they are utilized to accentuate certain peculiarities of the ground, cut strokes are particularly effective. On a wooden court the fast ball struck low is very effective, because there is small resistance on impact with the ground and thus the pace of the rebound is little modified by the spin. On beaten clay the lifted balls are effective when the surface is hard and dry. Many players who excel in

lifting their drives have gained their experience on hardened clay courts. When a court is wet the cut strokes are much more effective than the lifted strokes.

It is on turf courts that the spin imparted to the ball gives the best results. The increased resistance at the point of impact with the ground causes the ball to describe most unexpected rebounds. When the grass is long and damp I assure you it is no easy task to take a cut drive of Tilden's.

Of all modern champions Tilden is the outstanding player who knows how to apply the necessary spin to the ball. His first service ball is always rapid. His second rebounds every time in a different manner. From the back of the court he mixes a large number of slightly lifted strokes with a few cut drives, varying according to the play of his opponent and the state of the ground. Tilden never imparts an exaggerated spin, for modern tennis emphasizes more and more the ineffectiveness of this method. The increased speed of the slightly lifted ball is much more effective and accuracy is more easily attained.

CHAPTER XV

MATCH

To a player who has excellent strokes, who knows his own strength, who has been able to penetrate the temperament and to judge the quality of the strokes of his adversary, who has, in short, worked out a good tactical plan, there may still be wanting the quality of knowing how to conduct a match in order to win it. Of two players of equal skill whose strokes and tactics are about equal, the one who has the most chance of winning is he who knows how to proportion his efforts to the circumstances, to play according to the score. He will not hesitate to husband his energies for a few games in order subsequently to produce a greater effort when the right moment comes. Two examples.

I played in 1922, at Brussels, my first five-set match against the Englishman Roper-Barrett. I had the luck to win the first two sets quickly, but as quickly lost the third set, not without noticing, however, that my adversary, more and more often and for longer and longer in-

tervals, stopped between the games, near the umpire's seat, to take his breath. Instead of applying myself as much as I could to win the fourth set, I contented myself with trying to tire my adversary, with obliging him to come near the net, to take a short ball, to compel him afterwards to return to the back of the court to take a lob. I lost 6-0 in the fourth, but won 6-0 in the fifth set because I had succeeded in husbanding my energies and producing my effort at the moment when the fatigue of my adversary rendered it more effective.

In the course of the third set of the match which I played in May, 1927, against Tilden at St. Cloud, I was taken with extremely violent cramp. I immediately abandoned the tactics of regularity which I had followed until then, hit harder, tried to place my returns from side to side without concerning myself with winning the set. I had only one idea: of saving my energy, moving about as little as possible whilst tiring Tilden as much as I could. I lost the third set, but I should have lost it with even more certainty if I had tried to prolong the rallies. And in the fifth set, less fatigued and nervous than an adversary who had been making continuous efforts

for a very tense three hours, I had the good luck to win it.

It is quite good in war to profit by the physical or moral faltering of the adversary. At Wimbledon, in June last, Cochet beat Tilden owing to an inexplicable faltering of the great American at a most critical stage in the match. All, even his adversary, had nothing but words of admiration—and justly so—for the manner in which Cochet availed himself of the opportunity to attack as soon as Tilden's lapse gave him the chance.

I have always been grateful to Tilden and Hunter when they set themselves to lob above my head, during five sets, in the semi-final of the Championship of France at St. Cloud. On that day, by chance, instead of smashing without confidence, encouraged by a few happy shots I smashed better and better as the match went on. But what matches have I not lost, have I not made my partners lose also, because an adversary knew how to lob, and realized that I lacked confidence in smashing!

On a tennis court one must always pay attention to the words of an important third party in a tennis match, namely, the umpire. Sometimes

it is not in observing oneself, nor in studying the adversary, that one recognizes the right moment for producing an effort or on the contrary for easing down, but in playing to the score.

Borotra has the reputation of playing tennis without reflecting. No reputation is less merited.

Certainly Borotra, owing to a peculiar technique, cannot vary his tactics much, but, within the limits which his strokes permit, he marvelously adapts his play to his adversary and especially to the circumstances of the score, which will materially influence his methods. He has a formidable method of dominating a game when he gives himself the trouble to do so.

When he beat me at Wimbledon last year, right at the beginning of the match he noticed that I could not pass him with the aid of my backhand stroke. Instead of ceaselessly attacking my backhand stroke, which would perhaps have allowed me to tune it up, he saw the wisdom of rarely playing in the left corner of the court, contenting himself with winning his service up to four games all. But then, in four rapid returns placed on my backhand, followed by four volleys, he won my service game and the set with the following game. The second set was a repetition of the first set. During the third and the

fourth sets he remained at the back of the court, resting, playing on my forehand stroke, lulling me into a sense of absolute confidence. In the fifth set, however, encouraged by the public, who delighted to see him again bounding at the net after having thought him to be dying during two sets, Borotra let loose such a series of attacks on my backhand play that I could only win two games. I was filled with admiration for his intelligence and his cleverness.

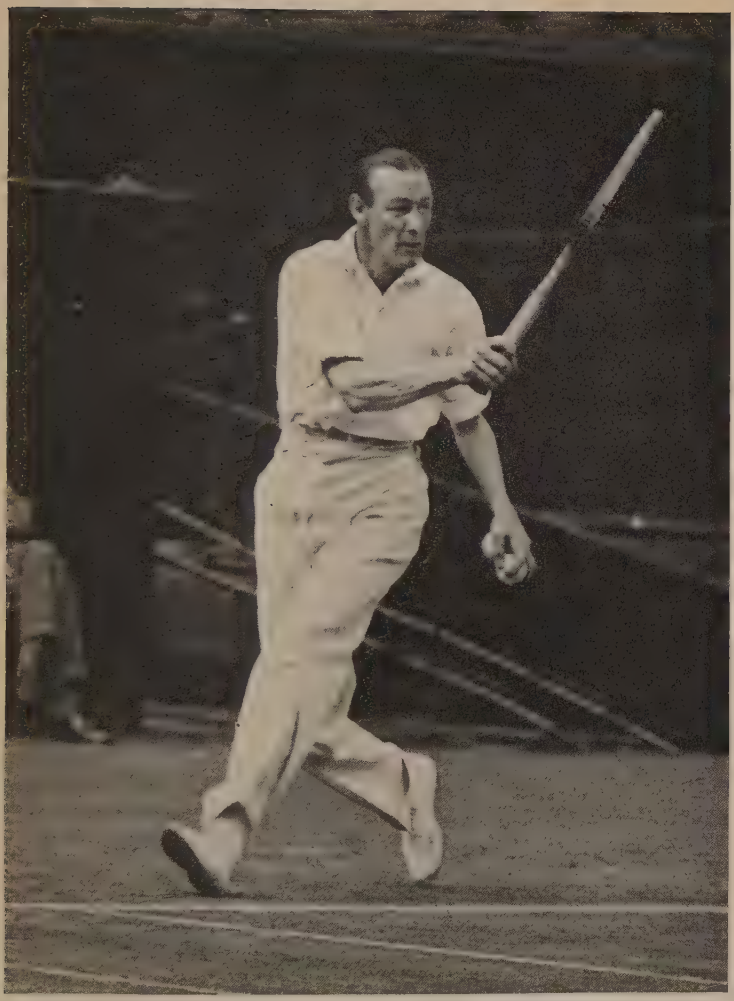
Too many players see in a match a simple succession of points. It is not always the player who wins the most points who finally wins: it is he who knows how to distribute the more judiciously the points which he wins, so as to win not more games than his adversary but the games which will enable him to win at least one set more than his adversary.

In a game the first point is not very important, the second is a little more important, and the third point, the one which brings the score to 15-30, 30-15, 40-0 or 0-40, is much the most important. At 30-0 the majority of players are inclined to ease off a little, as though they are already at 40-0. Thus it all too frequently happens that they find themselves at 30-15 instead of 40-love. At 0-30 one must not be dis-

couraged. If one wins the third point the score is, after all, only 15-30.

To play according to the score may necessitate the application of all one's energy at critical periods in a match.

In a set, still more than in a game, it is necessary to foresee the possible eventualities that may arise. At 4-all it is necessary to think of the difference that there may be in leading 5-4 or on being led 5-4, and with whom the service will rest in that all-important ninth game. To serve the first in a set is a great advantage. In a match between two players of approximately equal skill, the server, game by game, takes the advantage seven times out of ten at least, and very frequently the score passes from 1-1 to 4-4. The player who has served the first thus wins his service, and reaches 5-4. It will suffice for him in order to win the set to win once the service of his adversary. On the contrary, his adversary will have to, like him, win the opposite service, but also, afterwards, must not lose his own. And all the players who have some experience of match play have noticed that it happens very often that a player, just after having won the service of his adversary, loses his in his turn, even when he had won it up till then very easily.



Topical Press Agency

ANDERSON'S FOREHAND DRIVE

I have heard the American player Howard Kinsey, who is a professional now, say that it is excellent tactics to let the adversary serve first, especially if he has a fast service, because it happens very often that a player serves very badly when his muscles are cold. I believe, in truth, that when one follows with the service in the second game the loosening-up of the first game is hardly of value. Moreover, if it is possible that leaving the adversary to serve first may sometimes permit of converting the gain of his first service by the margin 6-4 at the end of the first set, serving first at the beginning of the following set and at the beginning of each of the other sets (so long as the preceding one has been won with two games only in advance), the adversary will be finally given the advantage. However, these tactics are of doubtful value.

Whatever may be the score, if you are fresher than the adversary you must endeavor to win. Led 5-0 in a set, you must not let it go to the adversary without a struggle, unless it is desired to husband resources for winning the following set more securely. On the contrary, it must never be thought that the five games to love position is necessarily decisive. A set is not by any means won when one leads even five games to

none. At Wimbledon, Tilden led Cochet by two sets to love, five games to one and his own service. He was on the eve of a marvelous victory. He tried shots that were so difficult that he lost sixteen points in succession, and, becoming demoralized when he realized this long chain of errors, he never dared to attack afterwards.

In a match in three sets the second set is much more important than the first. It happens much more frequently that the winner of a match in three sets has gained the last two sets rather than the first and the third.

In a five-set match the first set is often won by the player who is the most quickly in action rather than by the better player. The second set, on the contrary, is almost always won by the better player, who finally secures the advantage. If the first set has been lost the second set must be won at all cost, bearing in mind that if it is not won one will be led two sets to none, a formidable obstacle to overcome. On the contrary, if a player has won the first set he must remember that to win the second set will enable him to take an almost decisive advantage. If he is proposing to ease down at all for tactical reasons, let it be after winning the second set and not the first.

When the end of a match approaches, a player should always reason to himself, if he is on the point of losing, that the player who maybe is going to win is not always very careful, that he is often too confident, and that the moment has come to show him his error. For that reason, if one is going to win, one must remember that there is no adversary who plays better than one who is nearly beaten. Desperation can be a hardy ally.

It is essential always to keep enough sang-froid on a tennis court, especially towards the end of a set or of a match, to judge correctly the strokes of the adversary and to estimate the value of the effort required to take them. It is not easy to see clearly the benefit that one may draw from a desperate effort to take a well-placed ball, except under most pressing conditions.

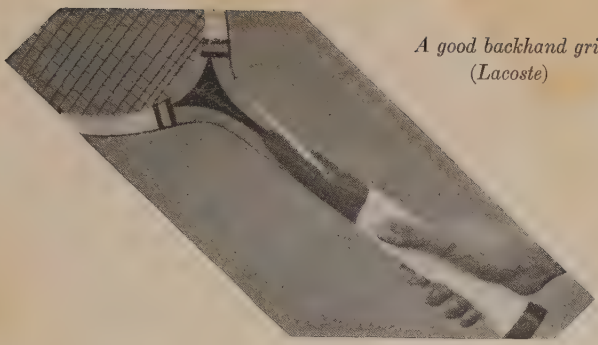
The player must learn not to even make a gesture, sometimes, for taking a shot that could not be returned effectively. Borotra has often lost matches because he wanted at any cost, at the beginning of a match, to take a difficult lob, and thus, in the fifth set, he has missed several easy volleys as a result of the fatigue entailed by the waste of energy earlier in the match.

But one must also appreciate the value of a desperate stroke which surprises and demoralizes an adversary who was certain to have won the point. Very often Tilden has won matches by risking very difficult strokes at the moment his adversaries were about to win.

In 1924, playing in the final of the Singles Championship of America against Johnston, Tilden appeared beaten and quite incapable of taking a long, sharply angled volley, which must have led the little Californian to believe that the famous cup was his. Tilden launched forward with all his speed, took the ball far out of the court, returned it outside of the net post just in the opposite corner of the court. This was the turn of the tide of victory. Tilden afterwards beat a completely demoralized adversary without trouble.

One of the most useful qualities that a tennis player may wish to possess is always to appreciate the effectiveness of the tactics which he has adopted in relation to the others, which he might have chosen instead.

One should, once your tactics have been chosen, know for what period you can apply them providing they are effective. On the contrary, they should be changed when one is losing.



A good backhand grip
(Lacoste)

A good grip for the forehand volley

Johnston's peculiar forehand grip

The psychological point at which to change is a matter of supreme importance.

When a notable advance has been made in attacking, in hitting hard, in playing often at the net, the game should not be slackened down, or less risk taken, owing to excessive confidence or for reasons of prudence. On the contrary, when within reach of victory, playing surely and carefully, one must not, impatiently, in order to win more quickly, attack and—lose.

When a player loses he should ascertain whether the defeat is due to the sheer superiority of his opponent or whether it is due to faulty tactics. There are, however, occasions when it may be advisable to use tactics whose ultimate object is not at once apparent. These may, in some cases, prove to be the only tactics which can allow of winning. If you should find you are completely dominated, there must never be any hesitation in entirely changing tactics. A match keenly contested at the beginning is frequently hard fought to its conclusion because neither of the adversaries dares to change his tactics. On the contrary, in a match between two players of equal strength, if one dominates at the beginning very often the other wins afterwards, when, forced to realize that he has at first

pursued wrong methods, he adopts new tactics.

It often happens that Cochet, being indifferent, willfully loses the first two sets. But the more he is dominated at first, the better does he realize that he must take more trouble, and the more decisive is the recoil.

A Borotra, and especially a Tilden, have often pushed the technical art to the point of not winning too easily, when they might have done so, for fear their adversary should discover more dangerous tactics than those which he had first chosen. But it is, in truth, a very dangerous game not to make sure of an advantage, as rapidly as possible, which is within one's reach. A manner of winning a match which is worth almost all the others is that of exerting oneself unsparingly from the first to the last ball. There must be no mental or physical relaxation, for this is always dangerous.

CHAPTER XVI

TEMPERAMENT

MANY tennis players, in spite of an almost perfect execution and considerable match-play experience, will never rise to a high level. On the contrary, there are many champions whose strokes and tactics are not at all remarkable, but who win because they possess what the others lack: calm, concentration, patience, and the will to win.

In order to be able to get the best possible results it is essential to remain calm at all costs.

The most effective method of ensuring calmness is to concentrate on the ball and the adversary, to keep, as it were, within the limits of the court, to hear nothing but the impact of the ball on the racquets and the score announced by the umpire, to fix one's entire attention on the match itself. Even the presence of the spectators must be forgotten.

In 1925, playing at Wimbledon against Lycett, I noticed at the moment of serving that my adversary had turned his back on me, re-

spectfully motionless at the back of the court. I then lifted my eyes and I noticed that all the spectators had risen, their eyes fixed towards one and the same point, namely, the Royal Box. Entirely concentrated on my match, I had noticed nothing of the arrival of the King, nor the fact that fifteen thousand people had risen in their seats.

Several times during the course of the final match of the Championship of France, in 1927, little showers caused annoying movements amongst the spectators due to the opening and shutting of umbrellas. Each time I won several points following because I am sure I gave less attention than my adversary to what was happening around the court.

Before and during a match, in all that which creates the atmosphere of lawn tennis, in all that one cannot help noticing, any cause of nervousness should be scrupulously avoided.

You must not be upset, for instance, if the referee appoints your worst enemy as umpire: you must tell yourself that he will be more anxious to be impartial on that account. You must not despair if they want you to play on a bad court; your adversary may, perhaps, be more inconvenienced by the fact than you. You must

not get upset if you see a match being prolonged, the finish of which you are awaiting in order that you might play yourself, and because you fear you may have to finish in a bad light. Hope that you may win quickly or that your adversary won't see as well as you do. In any case, you and your opponent will have to share the disabilities whatever they are.

During a match you must never allow yourself to be upset if you are the victim of an error of umpiring. One point in a match is nothing. It is not the loss of the point which will really handicap you; it is the upsetting of yourself by thinking of the manner in which you have lost it. Learn to disdain such incidents. It is hard, but it can be done.

The two most nervous tennis players that I know are certainly Count Salm and Nicolas Mishu. As soon as they hold a racquet they seem incapable of mastering themselves. Both of them know it and make a joke of it. A little before the war, Count Salm had been invited by a friend to Lille to play a tournament. Every day his friend asked him with a more and more anxious countenance if there was anything he lacked. At the end Salm asked him the reason for these questions. His friend finally admitted

that the whole of Lille, from the beginning of the tournament, had come to the courts filled with the expectation that Count Salm would resort to some form of eccentricity. Seeing him as calm as he always ought to be they thought he was indisposed or discontented.

Mishu hardly yields the palm to Salm on the question of nervousness. As soon as the sun seems to him too warm, as soon as the wind rises or the ball boys have distracted his attention, Mishu gets angry.

I saw him one day, when he had only just arrived from London for the purpose of passing two weeks at Nice, suddenly quit an over-watered court in the middle of a match and take a train for England via Calais two hours later.

André Gobert was a nervous and impressionable tennis player. He did not get angry, but he often imagined himself a prey to some strange malady which he described as severe shivers, a Catalonian knife planted in the stomach or his hair standing on end. At Wimbledon, playing against Gore under a leaden sky, he commenced to play without a sweater, but, as the match went on, he put on sweater after sweater, pretending that the cold prevented him from playing.

It is difficult to know to what point the nervousness of Tilden is real and profound. Tilden is naturally very nervous, but in my opinion he has succeeded in mastering himself perfectly. The gestures of impatience or of anger which escape him sometimes are rather "stage tricks" or, more aptly expressed, "court tricks" (and that is not surprising in the case of one who is, by profession, an actor) than the evident proof of a marked nervousness.

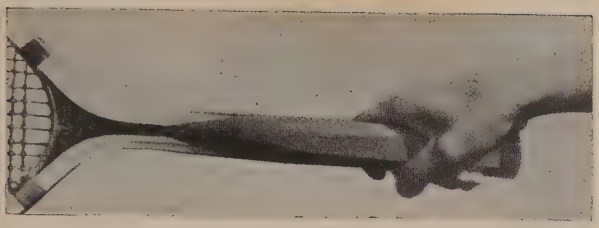
I believe that I am generally regarded as being extremely calm. I must confess that on a tennis court I am more or less calm, although physiologically I am very nervous. Too many people think that calm on a tennis court is a natural quality. It is actually a state produced by mental discipline. If you wish to become calm, make a point of appearing calm. Every one will say that you are calm and you will end in believing it yourself. And to believe that you are calm is really half the battle.

Before a match one should always imbue oneself with the idea that one can and will win. Confidence may be suggested exactly as calm may be suggested. It emanates from the mind. The value of an adversary should certainly not be underrated, the effectiveness of his strokes should

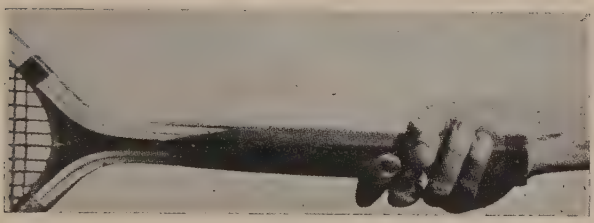
not be ignored, the study of his tactics should not be disdained. One could not, if one did not know how the adversary might win, imagine beating him. But one should always hope to play better than ever before and form a habit of visualizing success. It is not good to form the view that one may lose. There is an auto-suggestion of success in tennis, as in everything else in life.

Brugnon would be one of the most difficult players to beat if he possessed a little more confidence in himself: if, before a match, he more often believed himself capable of winning it. But, instead of thinking that he will surely win, or at least has as good a chance as his opponent, he frequently contemplates defeat; he magnifies the qualities of his adversary without realizing his own possibilities and always, in his greatest matches, visualizes defeat. Three years running at Wimbledon, against Raymond, Anderson, and Kinsey, he failed because, surprised to see himself so near to winning, he did not react when his adversaries, in sheer despair, made their final effort.

Since I have been playing tennis I do not remember ever having commenced a match without firmly hoping to win. There are always two entirely distinct points of view within me: that of



Tilden's backhand grip



Tilden's forehand grip

The best grip for the service

(Tilden, Patterson, Johnston, Lacoste, etc.)

the technician or of the tactician who sets himself coldly to compare the strength and weakness of the adversary and his own in order to choose the manner in which he must conduct his game, and also the point of view of the player who wishes to win at all cost, who harbors illusions, ignores plain facts, and asks his imagination not to let him see anything but victory so as to be better able to snatch it when it comes within his reach. I have played often against players who I knew were much stronger than I, and always hoped to win, expecting a miracle, if necessary, to aid me. When I lost I would find a thousand reasons to explain my defeat and, thanks to the certainty of having learned an excellent lesson, I hoped afterwards, with my added experience, to be able to beat anybody. This habit I have formed in tennis, of never establishing relations between the knowledge of the effectiveness of the games and of the probable fashion in which a match will end, renders me incapable of indicating beforehand the winner of a game. When a friend asks me how to play against this or that adversary, I sometimes know how to indicate good tactics for the purpose, and reply suitably, because I rely on reasoning. But when some one asks me who is going to win a match, out of habit

I often allow myself to be guided by my imagination, and I am very often wrong. That is why I never bet on a game of tennis.

Very often one must give a proof of patience on a tennis court. A player must never attack out of impatience only, because he is in a hurry to see an exchange finish, without waiting for a favorable opportunity. And sometimes he must untiringly be content to return without attacking throughout two sets, awaiting the moment when the adversary will lose his patience and allow himself to attack injudiciously.

I have sometimes met adversaries who played the same game as I do. In my first match in the Davis Cup I was opposed to a Dane named Larsen, who possessed extraordinary regularity. During two sets I had not the patience to wait until he missed his strokes. I was anxious to attack. Led two sets to none, I realized that I required patience to play my normal game, to indefinitely prolong the rallies. I won the two following sets, but, having resigned myself to patience too late, exhausted, I lost the fifth set.

Sometimes patience becomes courage on a tennis court, when one is fatigued and an extraordinary moral and physical effort is necessary in order to remain on the court. I assure you that

it meant a lot of courage for Tilden and me to continue playing, to return the ball untiringly, when games added themselves to games in this fifth set (11–9) of our match at St. Cloud in the final of the French Championship. Borotra has many times given proof of great courage on a tennis court. In 1926, in the Championship of America, he successively beat Richards and Johnston, notwithstanding extreme fatigue. At the beginning of the third set which he played against Johnston, after having lost the first two sets, he appeared so tired that it appeared very doubtful to everybody that he could finish the third set, but he resisted fatigue until the end of the fifth set, which he won.

Borotra was greatly reproached in America for having shown signs of excessive lassitude at the beginning of this third set. People thought he had been playing a sort of comedy, with a view to lulling the vigilance of his adversary. But Borotra was not fooling at all; at the beginning of the third set he was physically exhausted, but he succeeded in finding the moral courage to play on, notwithstanding his fatigue. He was wrong in one thing, that is, in showing too much what he really felt; but he knew, perhaps, it would not prevent him from continuing to play by sheer

effort of will until the last ball had been struck.

In truth, one rarely loses a match owing to purely physical fatigue, but very often one may lose because there is not sufficient courage forthcoming to surmount a physical lassitude to which one is tempted to give way. Fatigue is a word which may be interpreted very differently. There are no scales which would permit of gauging the fatigue of a player, because it is never possible, even for himself (and it is this which excuses Borotra), to know how long he will have the mental energy to resist fatigue.

In February, 1926, whilst the match France–America was being played, Tilden played comedy every evening on a Broadway stage. On the Thursday he played in the singles against me, on Friday he had to play for five sets before winning the doubles, on Saturday he played in a *matinée* at his theater just before meeting Borotra in a match which decided the issue of the meeting. Led two sets to one, in the opinion of everybody he was beaten, incapable of the physical effort necessary to win the two sets necessary for victory. When he appeared on the court to play the fourth set he was as tired as when he left the court for the usual ten minutes' rest at the end of the third set; he had not recovered his energy

in that ten minutes, but he was determined to ignore his fatigue. He won without a struggle.

When one has studied everything and weighed all on the tennis court there remains an element which escapes all conscious control, but which indicates the conqueror in many matches: the will to win. Will, like calm, is sometimes a natural quality, but it is also a quality which develops if a little trouble is taken. Imagine before each match that you will win after a close struggle because you will have resisted the depressing influence of weariness so much better than your adversary: you will have willed to win more than he did.

Flood yourself with this spirit of the will to win and you will soon feel an increased energy within you. This will react on your opponent.

There is a method which must not be neglected to develop within one any moral quality. This is to imagine often that in some circumstances one may prove precisely one's possession of the quality that it is desired to develop. Little by little one penetrates oneself—for the brain and our subconsciousness very easily confound what they imagine and what they see—with the idea that, once having given proof of this power to will, one will always give proof of it.

A player is not always animated with the same will on the court. Force yourself to give proof of this power of will. Investigate, note all the reasons that you may have for desiring to win. To will is to know how to utilize the force that lies behind your desire.

Borotra last spring at St. Cloud did not much desire (I know not why) to win. He allowed himself to be beaten without ever really wishing to win at any cost, as is his custom.

On the contrary, he always attaches great importance to the tournament of Wimbledon. Desiring greatly to win, he gave proof of intense will and only owed his failure to sheer bad luck.*

I have often remarked that an unexpected defeat is generally followed by a series of successes; the best means of willing to win is to be beaten from time to time. That allows of better measurement of the meaning which separates the two expressions "to lose" and "to win," and that renews the desire to win. One is so made that one accustoms oneself much more easily to success than to defeat; a series of victories seems always rapidly naturally to blunt the will. On the contrary, a defeat causes the well-known reaction: the desire to regain what one has just lost.

* He had match point against Cochet in the final.

The will on a tennis court does not manifest itself solely by the stimulus that it gives to the muscles and the brain; it manifests itself by an action which operates directly on the will of the adversary. In many tennis matches there is a species of magnetism emanating from the mental attitude of a player animated with a great deal of will of which he makes use, more or less consciously, to paralyze the will of his adversary.

I do not believe in the occult sciences, but I believe that one senses the will of an adversary on a court very well and that many unexpected results would be explained if, on a court, one could make a comparison of the mental attitude of the adversaries instead of only seeing their strokes and their tactics.

When a player several times in succession defeats an adversary of his own strength, one is often wrong in seeking the reason in the manner in which the strokes and the methods of the adversaries clash. It will be found sometimes that the player who has consistently lost sometimes wins, first one match then another, because by dint of being beaten he has created within himself a greater desire to conquer. The day comes when his will, instead of bending to that of his adversary, dominates it.

Thus may defeat triumph over disaster.

CHAPTER XVII

CHAMPIONSHIPS

It is quite remarkable to note the ever increasing prominence given to sport in almost all the countries of the world. The pages of the daily papers and reviews are filled with sporting reports, and we even find articles of feminine attire being given sporting titles.

Among the many sports, tennis probably enjoys the greatest vogue. There are tennis courts in the smallest towns of the smallest states, in addition to the innumerable courts in the great cities such as London, Paris and New York. Thousands of young boys and girls in all latitudes and longitudes play tennis every day.

Tennis is an excessively popular sport because a tennis match is as agreeable to watch as it is to play. The tennis championships attract greater and greater crowds year by year, and as the popularity of the game increases so the organization improves.

In no other sport does there exist a contest comparable to the Davis Cup, which brings together the representative teams of more than

P. and A.

BEGINNING OF A FOREHAND STROKE (LACOSTE)

thirty different nations every year. In no other sport are there organized, with the same degree of success, international contests like those which bring to St. Cloud, to Wimbledon, and to Forest Hills the best players in the world. From the 1st of January to the 31st of December tennis tournaments succeed one another without interruption. In New Zealand and in Ireland, in Norway as in South Africa, in Japan as in the Argentine, in India as in Mexico, many débutantes dream of the great deeds of Tilden and Miss Wills. Far away, perhaps, from Wimbledon, from St. Cloud and from Forest Hills, in some little town of unknown name, some future champion of the world may be learning the first principles of the game of tennis.

To become a champion, to triumph over all other players, it is not merely sufficient to be quick and skillful. We have seen what physical, mental and nervous tension may be hidden by the elegance, the ease, and the calm of the great player. If one could penetrate the mask of the champion one would see that only a training meticulously regulated permits of scaling the rungs of the ladder at the top of which some people foolishly imagine that a Borotra or a Tilden has been born.

Tennis is an athletic sport. To progress rapidly it is necessary to be vigorous. In order to win a championship one must be in good condition. A high standard of physical condition is essential to be able to produce effort after effort in the course of a match, and much endurance and power of recuperation is essential to be able to play one's best throughout the period of a tournament. Last year, in twelve days I played at St. Cloud six singles matches and five doubles (all the best of five sets), and four mixed doubles matches (all the best of three sets). To win the Championship of America, it may be necessary for six consecutive days to play a five-set match each day; and usually, as the inferior players are gradually eliminated, each successive day presents a more arduous task.

In order to play good tennis one must be in good health. If the general health is not satisfactory, the muscles and the lungs cannot work with full efficiency. In March, 1926, I came back from New York very tired, scarcely recovered from congestion of the lungs. Before I had completely recovered I played at Copenhagen and then at Prague. Hardly back in Paris, I played the match France–America at the Racing Club, then the Championship of France. Naturally

my play degenerated, because I was incapable of producing the necessary effort to win. It was only when I had reluctantly resigned myself to not playing at Wimbledon that I commenced to recover both form and health. Two months later, in consequence of this much-needed rest, I played better than ever, beating Tilden in the Davis Cup and winning the Championship of America.

I probably devote more attention to physical training than most players. For a considerable time before a tournament, I endeavor to lead a regular life: I never smoke, and drink but little alcohol.

I find it very satisfactory before a series of very hard tournaments to pass one or two weeks in the open air, playing golf for example. I do not believe it is possible to play golf and tennis well together, but, in my opinion, golf is an excellent exercise for gradually preparing a tennis player for the more violent efforts which he will have to put forth subsequently on the courts. Each morning, when I am training to play a tournament, I execute a series of breathing exercises and do a little skipping. During the tournament I content myself with a short series of breathing exercises.

Many players commence their physical training on the eve of the first match which they have to play. I know of many players who, accustomed to going to bed late, retire very early and generally remain awake almost the whole of the night. Thus they are nervous on the following day. But one must store up a long time in advance the "calories" which are burnt on the courts. A month at least before a tournament one should commence to retire early to bed, and should endeavor to take as much nourishment as one can assimilate.

During the tournament, a player who has commenced to train a long time before should not change his habits in any way, should go to bed early but not too soon, eat normally, but take great care to finish his meals at least two hours before playing. Two years ago at Wimbledon, playing against Jacob, I lunched much too late. I played well in the first set, but during the entire second set could not play for lack of wind; it was only at the end of the third set that I could resume my normal play.

The majority of players during a tournament avoid thinking much of the matches they play, and occupy their evenings in playing bridge or visiting the cinema. They arrive at the club a

little time before playing. These methods do not suit everybody. In my opinion a player should endeavor to find, by experience and observation, what suits his temperament best. This will enable him to cultivate a habit of calmness and a power to concentrate when on the court.

Personally, I do not play well unless I think a lot about my matches. Nothing succeeds with me so well, before an important match, as to remain alone as much as possible in an atmosphere of complete calm. During the three or four days which preceded the matches of the Davis Cup in Philadelphia last year, I took all my meals alone and refused all invitations. I felt so well on the court that the following week in New York, when playing in the National Singles, I did not depart in any way from this régime. At the end of the tournament I was still calm and collected, whereas many of my adversaries were more or less nervous or shaky.

The majority of players refrain from playing on the eve of a great match, or, if they play, do very little. On the contrary, I often play five or six sets on the eve of an important match, and practice for a long time in the morning when I want to win in the afternoon. In all the practice games one plays just before or during a tourna-

ment, one should, still less than ordinarily, trouble about the result. One should seek before all to insure one's execution, to execute and tune up the strokes which are not the best for winning the practice game that one is playing, but which will allow of winning the match for which preparation is being made.

It is a subject of amusement for Borotra, Brugnon and Cochet, who practice less than I do (because they have a more natural execution), to hear me say on the morning of a match: "This is terrible, I have lost my backhand stroke," or "I cannot serve any more." I beg them to come with me to the club and ask them to enable me to practice the stroke which I no longer execute correctly.

Much is spoken of the precision of the great tennis players. I assure you that it is all relative. The difficulties that I have always found in getting another player (one cannot always practice with a Darsonval) to send me a ball which I can return by executing the stroke that I wished to practice were the origin of the idea that I had to create a mechanical opponent for myself. It was in perfecting a machine, which I intended to reserve for my practice, that I realized how much it could aid a professor in giving his lesson, what

technical progress it could allow anybody to make, how many hours it could save a young "hopeful" from passing on the court before becoming a champion.

Once he is carefully trained, it remains for a player, prior to playing his first match, whether it be at St. Cloud, at Wimbledon or on the courts of quite a small club, to understand what obligations are involved by the sole act of entering for a championship.

I do not know who had the idea of inscribing above the door which gives access to the center court both at Forest Hills and at Wimbledon two of the finest lines of the celebrated poem by Rudyard Kipling, "If." But this was an excellent idea, and these two lines ought to be inscribed at the entrance to all the courts where tennis is played. They define the condition on which it is alone permitted to play a match:

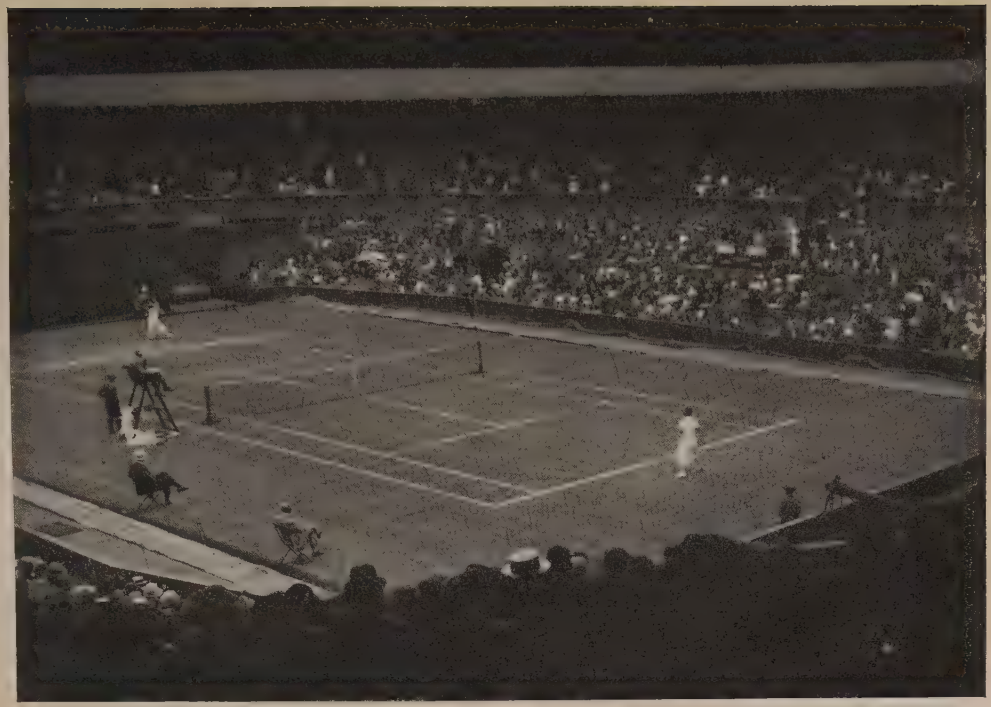
> If you can meet with triumph and disaster
> And treat those two impostors just the same!

A tennis player should be able to lose and win without revealing in his attitude the value which he may attach to the result. This is the most essential law of sport: one should never play tennis in order to win, one should try to play as well as

possible and be content to have done one's best. One should never endeavor to win unless the efforts one makes to triumph will elevate the quality of the play.

Many tennis champions, on the pretext that they are amateurs and play only for their own pleasure, render it extremely difficult for the officials of the tournaments in which they take part to carry out their task. A tennis player, whoever he may be, should always try to facilitate the work of the referee of a tournament in which his entry should be an indication that he is happy to play.

He should not without grave reason criticize the manner in which the draw has been made; he should respect the order of play and not complain if he is not given the court to play on which he prefers. Although he is not bound by any contract, a tennis player should always endeavor not to disappoint the spectators. One should certainly not play for the public, but for the game: a tennis match is not merely a spectacle. The public does not expect that each of the gestures of the players is calculated to amuse it and interest it as much as possible, but it likes to see a high-spirited match, the players putting forth their best efforts. This is the spectacle that the play-



Edwin Trim & Co., Wimbledon

WIMBLEDON CENTRE COURT

ers should provide. Certainly the presence of a more or less numerous public, the applause that you may receive, count much in the interest which tennis has for you. One must always show a certain amount of regard for the people who come to see you play. The public must not be said to be ignorant if it applauds you less than your adversary. You do not, perhaps, merit anything better, and if you seek a moral comfort you can always tell yourself that the public almost always applauds the weakest player!

Above all one should always try to render a game as agreeable as possible for the adversary one meets, if only in the supreme hope that he will return the compliment. One must try to appreciate the difficult strokes which he brings off as much as those executed by oneself. In the most important match that we had ever played against one another, in Philadelphia in September last, Tilden never failed to approve with a "Well played, René," each of the nice strokes that I was fortunate enough to bring off.

The speed of the game should not be pressed in an exaggerated manner when the fatigue of the adversary is sensed, nor rest taken unduly between rallies when one is short of wind. Do not seek to serve before the adversary is ready.

Do not take advantage of a minute's inattention on his part to surprise him. You need never spare an adversary, but you must always be fair. Always try to win as rapidly as possible. Anybody would prefer to be beaten 6-0, 6-0 rather than feel his adversary had spared him.

The decisions of the umpire should always be respected; never complain in any case when the umpire gives the adversary a point that you may think you have won. If a player feels himself obliged to give a point to the adversary he must do it discreetly. One may, if necessary, allow oneself to be guided by an anxiety for justice. It is inexcusable publicly to repudiate the umpire in order to seek the applause of the public.

There are many people, more and more numerous as the popularity of the sport grows, who condemn the championship meetings. There is no doubt that competition in sport may not be useful, may even be harmful, to the normal physical development, on account of the excesses which it may provoke. But the championship is the publicity of the sport and forms a most valuable means of attracting the mass towards physical exercise and health.

In a sport like tennis, championship contests are easily defended if only because the efforts

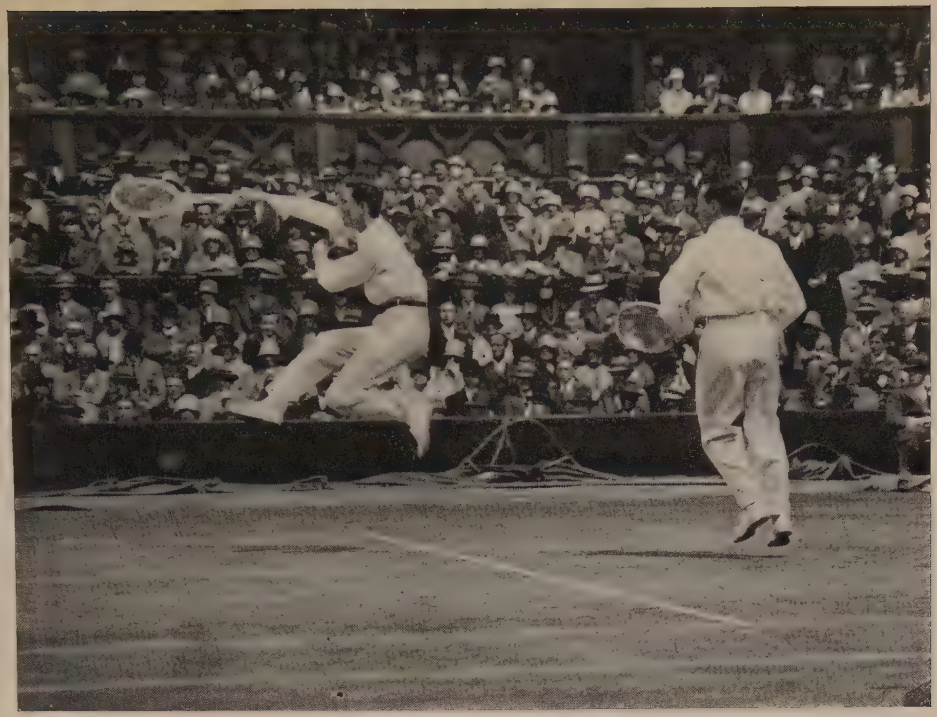
which they provoke compel the utilization not only of considerable physical strength and staying power but also the exercise of intelligence and will power. These strenuous matches necessitate considerable moral as well as physical discipline, the benefits of which are not lost. To play successful tennis one must become supple, rapid and skillful.

CHAPTER XVIII

DOUBLES

THE fact that he is excellent in singles play does not necessarily mean that a player will be capable of playing well in doubles, that he will be able to team up with another player with any certainty of success. Certainly the forehand stroke, backhand stroke, volley, etc., are executed in doubles just as in singles; that is, so far as the execution is concerned. The benefit of good technique always stands. But in a doubles match the player does not utilize his strokes in the same manner. He varies considerably his position on the court and he directs the ball which he wishes to be decisive in quite a different manner from the singles game. In singles a player may permit himself to follow the impulses of his own temperament and inclination, but in the doubles he must always be ready to efface himself, if necessary, in order to aid his partner. This is very necessary for good team work.

In order to play well in doubles it is essential that one should be a good volleyer.



P. and A.

A Great Team: Brugnon—Cochet

In singles, when near the net, a player may place the ball more easily outside the reach of his adversary, but should the volley be faulty he runs a great risk of not being able to reach a fast and well-placed return which he might easily get at the back of the court. In the doubles two good volleyers at the net are in a much stronger position for attacking than if they were at the back of the court, and it must be a rare good stroke that at least one of them cannot reach. A doubles match resolves itself into a struggle for the net position. The team which finds itself more often near the net nearly always wins. Borotra, in spite of a sometimes unrestrained personality (ofttimes awkward for his partner), is a very great doubles player because he is the best volleyer of the day, the most reliable and, at the same time, the most decisive player at the net.

Together with the volley, the service is a most important stroke in doubles. If in a singles match the games are won six times out of ten by the player who serves, then in doubles the proportion should certainly be increased to eight out of ten.

The chief advantage of the service lies in the fact that it concedes the privilege of opening the attack. An effective service opens up a strong

position. The server's partner is already posted at the net and is thus ready to deal with any faulty return. The server is advantaged because, by following up his delivery with speed, both he and his partner are able to assume a dominant position at once and respond with the volley in answer to the ground shot. The player receiving the service is disadvantaged to the extent that he cannot foretell with any degree of certainty the pace or pitch of the service.

Brugnon serves admirably in doubles. He serves an extremely fast and well-placed first ball, which is only rarely returned beyond the reach of his partner. He rapidly follows his first service to the net and is ready to take on the volley a ball which his partner cannot reach.

Brugnon serves a second service ball which is rather slow, is well placed and has considerable "kick." This allows him to come very close to the net and assume a very aggressive position. In the final of the Doubles Championship of France, last year, at St. Cloud, for five sets Brugnon constantly placed his service with admirable precision, so that the ball always fell very near the intersection of the service line and the center-line. Every time I had to strike the ball very high, at full arm's length, on my backhand. This

made it extremely difficult to prevent Cochet from "poaching" and killing my return.

In doubles the player should not place himself for serving as near as possible to the center of the baseline, but should go away two or three yards in order more easily to cover a cross-court return.

Exactly as in singles, when one follows one's service to the net, it may be satisfactory to place one's service, in doubles, as near as possible to the center-line. This diminishes the danger of your partner being passed down the alley and likewise diminishes the effectiveness of a very short cross-court return placed at the feet of the server on his way to the net.

The return of service is the most difficult stroke to execute well and regularly in doubles. Tilden and Hunter won at Wimbledon, at Boston and Philadelphia, the Championships of England and America and the Doubles Match of the Davis Cup Challenge Round because they return any service whatsoever steadily and with great accuracy.

Williams, who also executes extremely aggressive and marvelous service returns, takes the ball on the rise, places himself a yard at least in front of the baseline. He naturally strikes the ball

very high; he plays very short cross-court strokes, which fall very near the sideline. In doubles it is necessary at all costs to prevent the partner of the player who serves from reaching the ball and to oblige the server to execute only a low and difficult volley or even a half-volley.

Tilden places himself extremely far away to take the service, loses much time, strikes the ball lower and cannot play so short and so fast as a Cochet or a Williams. Nevertheless he gives enough speed to the ball and places it well enough to prevent the partner of the server from reaching it, and plays so close over the net that the server can only play a defensive volley. Tilden's doubles play has always aroused much controversy. That is natural, because he does not utilize the methods of the best doubles players. He makes most of his strokes as in singles, but his execution is so unique and accurate that he is, notwithstanding, an admirable doubles player, as results have proved.

The majority of players usually prefer either the left or the right court when receiving the service in doubles. This preference is generally based upon the character of the shot to be used.

Tilden always plays in the left court, and so,

too, do Borotra and Williams. Brugnon, Richards and Hunter prefer playing in the right court, although Brugnon plays very well in either. Personally, I believe that it is easier to play in the left than in the right court. To return the service one usually plays towards the right, which seems more natural to the majority of players, who are accustomed to attacking the backhand of their adversaries.

If the player who serves has a good service, it is not always possible, however careful one may be, to prevent the opponent at the net from intercepting the return.

The more audacious the opponent at the net may be the more often is it necessary to try to play a straight return which will "pass" him in his alley if he takes too much liberty in his desire to intercept a cross-court return. This is the only way of reminding him to be careful and keeping him in his place. Cochet, who strikes the ball with a very quick action, marvelously conceals the direction of his strokes. As soon as he sees the partner of the server move, he places down the line a return which it is impossible to take.

It is sometimes so difficult to return a good

service, especially if the server is quick on to the net, that, instead of trying a fast and plunging return, many players execute a lob.

Tilden and Hunter beat Borotra and Brugnon at Philadelphia by lobbing almost continuously over the head of the man at the net. In 1925 I saw the brothers Kinsey return for five sets the services of Patterson and of O'Hara Wood in an incessant rain of lobs and finally win.

Once the ball is in play the tactics for doubles are all reduced to the following:

1. Try to put the ball as rapidly as possible beyond the reach of your adversaries if with your partner, or alone, at the net.

2. If one is forced into a defensive position at the back of the court and the adversaries are at the net, then it is imperative that you prevent them from holding this dominant situation. You must in such circumstances play a fast shot which passes close to the net and forces a difficult volley, or resort to the lob.

It is often more necessary and more effective to lob in doubles than in singles. In singles, however near the net the adversary may be, one may put him in difficulties by a well placed stroke. In doubles two players quite close to the net are often able to execute an aggressive

volley whatever may be the stroke of the adversary. But the lob is a very effective stroke, unless it be very short. Even a Borotra or a Cochet have much trouble in placing a smash beyond the reach of two players who are in good position at the back of the court.

There is always a chance for a good lob to be perfectly successful and, in order to take it, the players who are at the net have to withdraw to the back of the court, thus yielding the post of attack to their adversaries.

Even more so than in singles the manner of placing himself on the court in doubles distinguishes the champion from the mediocre player. In doubles, as in singles, one must always avoid lingering in the forbidden zone between the baseline and the service line. One has the choice between two positions: one as near as possible to the net, the other a little behind the baseline; but whereas in singles one should always carefully prepare an incursion to the net, on the contrary in doubles one must always try to force the position very close to the net.

The partner of the player who serves places himself always at the net. The player who serves rushes forward immediately the ball is struck, and endeavors to place himself level with his

partner at the moment he has to take the return of the adversary. The greater part of the time the partner of the player who serves keeps on the side opposite to that whence the service is executed, but he may keep on the same side, in front of the player he serves. This is known as the American formation. The player who serves has certainly a great deal of trouble, if his partner places himself in front of him, to reach a fast return placed across the court. However the American formation is often utilized with success because the majority of players are accustomed to make a more or less stereotyped return, and they are nonplussed and disturbed when they have to play in front of them instead of across.

Williams, who always plays in the left court, executes admirable returns, but as soon as his adversaries place themselves in American formation and he is obliged to change the direction of his returns and place them along the line, he often misses his stroke.

It is very difficult to define the correct position of the partner of the player who returns the service. In the case of a pair such as Tilden and Hunter, the partner of the player who returns the service places himself on the same line as the latter, at the back of the court. When

their adversaries serve Tilden and Hunter abandon the net to them, adopt a defensive position and wait for an opportunity to force them to go back. They then advance, together, on a parallel line towards the net.

More and more one meets with teams who seek to utilize their returns like their services, in order to take position at the net. The partner of the player who returns the service places himself then quite near the net or a little in front of the service line; the player who returns the service strikes the ball with pace and rushes forward to join his partner at the net. It is quite evident that if the return is not perfect the server or his partner will have no trouble in placing a decisive stroke at the feet of their adversaries, but if the return is low and fast he who has executed it and his partner will be as near the net as their adversaries, and as well placed as them. From time to time one often sees the four players near the net in a doubles game. It is a marvelous sight to see Cochet, Borotra, Brugnon and Boussus letting fly fierce volleys at short range and taking them easily. It is owing to modern ideas on court position in doubles that a doubles match is often considered more attractive, more amusing, and more varied than a singles match.

There has been much discussion and there will be much more still on the point as to whether, in a good doubles team, each of the two players should content himself with taking the balls which are sent to him, which fall—or would fall if he did not take them at the net—in that section of the court which is in his care, or whether, on the contrary, it is wise that a player should take a ball which, judging by the manner in which it was placed, should have been returned by his partner.

In my opinion, every time that he has the opportunity, a player who realizes that the stroke which he is going to play will be more effective than that which his partner would execute, should go for the shot.

But every time a player "poaches" it must be remembered that he will probably find himself in a bad position to take the following stroke unless he has scored an "ace," for he will have created an opening that the adversary will not fail to exploit if he can easily take the stroke that one has just played. That is why it is necessary at any cost to execute a decisive stroke every time that one "poaches."

Borotra "poaches" marvelously. When his partner serves or returns the service, Borotra

places himself very near the net and, if he can reach the ball with some fantastic bound, with a powerful stroke of the wrist, he kills it.

In a double, where his partner plays two strokes Borotra plays at least three. Even when, by chance, Borotra is at the back of the court he will rush in at the moment his partner is preparing to strike the ball and execute a marvelous winning stroke.

In 1925 I played with him at New York against Patterson and Hawkes. I was in bad form and had lost three sets to none against Patterson on the previous day. For five sets Borotra played almost single-handed, playing sometimes in front of me, sometimes behind me, and finally we won, although a ball from Patterson struck him on the temple and stretched him unconscious on the court in the middle of the fourth set.

Borotra in full form is the most marvelous doubles player in the world, just as Cochet is the most admirable singles player. However, I consider Brugnon as a doubles player, on the average, more reliable and more effective than Borotra. His only weakness is his smash and a certain nervousness at critical moments. But Brugnon has an ideal temperament for playing in doubles; he has not a very strong personality,

readily effacing himself for a better placed partner. It is immaterial to him to play badly or to appear to play badly if his team wins. When he plays well he never bears a grudge against his partner for having made him lose.

Christian Boussus, the young French hope, is a marvelous doubles player. Left-handed, he places his service very well. Striking the ball very early, he executes plunging and rapid returns: he has a low, but accurate, volley, a marvelous smash and a volley on a level with the shoulder which is extremely fast and dangerous.

He will soon perhaps play in singles in the French Davis Cup team; but before two years are past he will surely play in the doubles.

De Buzelet, who has just won the Championship of France on covered courts, is also a marvelous doubles player. He executes strokes worthy of Gobert or Williams. He will also be a very great champion if he seeks to acquire more physical endurance.

Barrelet de Ricou, the youngest French player classed in the first rank, is not yet so strong as Boussus and de Buzelet either in doubles or in singles. Nevertheless if he works hard he will rapidly become their equal.

CHAPTER XIX

SUZANNE LENGLEN

For eight years, from 1919 to 1927, it may be said that Suzanne Lenglen was queen. She had no kingdom, capital or ministers, but she had great influence and a popularity and prestige which are usually attached to royalty alone. There was no land in which she had the right to plant a flag, but on the tennis courts in almost all countries of the world one saw evidence of her personality. Her sweaters, coats and turbans set a fashion and she always attracted immense crowds, who both admired and criticized her. For eight years every gesture of hers was photographed and filmed. What she wrote or said attracted world notice. Suzanne Lenglen laid the foundation of her career at a most appropriate spot—old Wimbledon. On the famous old center court, before a tremulous crowd, which blended calmness with admiration as only an English crowd can, Suzanne Lenglen succeeded by a prodigious effort in wresting from that incomparable player, Mrs. Lambert Chambers, the

scepter which she had held no less than seven times. The English crowd, in that month of July, 1919, was for a moment filled with a sad emotion, but this was followed by a full and generous recognition of the audacity and triumphant gracefulness of this young foreign girl. It was recognized at once that the championship had passed from the hands of one great player to those of another even more wonderful, if such a thing could possibly be.

The popularity of Suzanne Lenglen was unprecedented and universal; but it was in England that this was most profoundly rooted. This was probably because England is the nation most completely attached to sport, and because the English, who are lovers of the tradition attached to the glory of Wimbledon, were always grateful to Suzanne Lenglen for having won her first laurels on English soil and for having laid, at Wimbledon, the stepping-stone to what was clearly a phonomenal career.

Whenever Suzanne Lenglen came to England it was a public event. Placards on the motor buses announced her arrival. The newspapers related the details of her crossing of the English Channel. A veritable multitude of reporters waited for the lady champion at her hotel. Dur-

ing her meals the telephone bell rang constantly. When she went to Wimbledon her motor car, when she drew near the club, was often stopped by a crowd of autograph seekers. After her matches, every evening, hundreds of people would wait till she left the club in the hope of seeing her for a moment when she entered her car.

Nothing shook the popularity of Suzanne Lenglen while she was sustained by the admiration of all England, but suddenly everything around her seemed to collapse when, owing to a misunderstanding with the Wimbledon officials, Suzanne had most unfortunately kept Her Majesty the Queen waiting in the Royal Box to see a match in which Suzanne was a principal.

I saw Suzanne Lenglen play for the first time in 1921 at the Stade Français at St. Cloud. I was then a beginner and used to come occasionally to take a lesson on the courts of the Stade Français with Henri Darsonval. On the day of the final of the World's Championships I asked my parents to go with me to St. Cloud, but we arrived late, and I alone, owing to my having a card of membership to the club, was able to enter the grounds, promising to return in a few minutes. I succeeded in creeping into a place right

at the top of a crowded grandstand, and scarcely had I arrived when I saw entering the court, the two finalists of the Ladies' Singles Championship, Mrs. Mallory and Suzanne Lenglen. At first I was disappointed, as were most of those who saw Suzanne Lenglen for the first time after having heard so much about her. I expected her to execute extraordinary strokes, but she played with marvelous ease the simplest strokes in the world. It was only after several games that I understood what harmony was concealed by Suzanne Lenglen's simplicity, what wonderful mental and physical balance was hidden by the facility of her play. I had promised to stay a few minutes, but I remained there a long time without being able to depart, looking at this admirable spectacle with wide-open eyes.

The success of Suzanne Lenglen, the popularity which she enjoyed, had an extraordinary influence on the development of feminine tennis in Europe.

In England all young girls dreamed of winning the title of lady champion.

Miss Kitty McKane (now Mrs. Godfree) was for several years the principal rival of Suzanne Lenglen. An admirable match player, each time that Suzanne Lenglen did not play to the end

Wide World

THE DAVIS CUP DOUBLES

THE GERMANTOWN CRICKET CLUB OF PHILADELPHIA

at Wimbledon she won, beating Miss Wills in 1924 and Mlle. de Alvarez in 1926.

Miss Colyer and Mrs. Lycett, playing at the net like two men, reached the final of the Ladies' Doubles in 1925 and made a splendid fight against Miss Ryan and Suzanne Lenglen. Then Miss Fry became popular when she played in 1925 and reached the final of the Ladies' Singles. To-day Miss Goldsack, Miss Bennett, Miss Sterry, Miss Betty Nuthall and many others are disputing supremacy amongst the English lady players.

Thanks to Miss Wills (who is, without doubt, the best lady player in the world after Mlle. Lenglen) and to Mrs. Mallory (who is still playing admirably in America), the United States were victorious last year in the Wightman Cup. But I should be extremely surprised if, in a few years from now, England were not capable of building an almost invincible ladies' team.

During the time when Suzanne Lenglen proved herself supreme among women, there appeared in all European countries a considerable number of men players who proved capable of defeating the best English players.

Immediately after the war, thanks to Parke (who, added to the glory of having beaten

Brookes and Wilding and some famous Americans before the war, beat W. M. Johnston in 1920) and also to Kingscote (who held out for five sets against Tilden in the same year), England was still the first European nation in tennis.

But while the number of English players increased continuously, and England had more good players than any other country, no one of them—Turnbull, Godfree, Woosman, Gilbert, Kingsley, Wheatley, Higgs and Gregory—was ever able to sustain the great tradition created by the Dohertys. Perhaps Austin, Oliff and Avory will soon be champions, but there is nothing to enable one to assert with certainty that they will not fall short of the necessary quality, much as their immediate predecessors have done. English tennis is passing through a crisis; it cannot produce any great champions. Why? In the first place, because the Englishman is what he was before the war, an eclectic sportsman who divides his time among different sports. The climate of England is cold, the play is generally on slow, damp grass courts; all this slows the game down and offsets any attempt at speed. Thus the English players have little opportunity to play on really fast courts, where one may master

the control of the rising ball or reap the benefit of a fast service.

But this is important. Young English players do not fulfil the hopes placed in them largely because they are not sent frequently abroad; they are not furnished with the opportunity of acquiring that experience which is necessary to a great champion.

English players should confine themselves to practising a great deal; to specialize themselves; they should be made to play a great deal on covered courts, on fast hard courts, of which the soil would be harder than that usually found in England. Some English sports firm ought to make for England a ball that will bound as high in the English atmosphere as the same balls will bound in the much warmer atmospheres of America and France.

Few people, few players even, realize the action of a variation in temperature on the bounding of a tennis ball, on the elasticity of the racquet strings, and consequently on the conditions under which a match is played.

And the more players become accustomed to play with balls that bound high and quickly, and with racquets strung with high tension gut, the

more they will become accustomed to hit hard and to play fast. This will certainly improve their play under any conditions.

French players nearly all learned to play tennis on covered courts at the Paris Sporting Club, where the balls bound very high and the game is consequently very fast.

It is owing to this that the French play an extremely aggressive game, and are, in my opinion, more effective on slow courts than those who have learned their game on these courts, as the latter are thus more easily nonplused with pace.

When Parke and Kingscote abandoned the courts more or less completely, Washer, the Belgian, proved himself the best European player on hard courts, whilst Alonso was the most redoubtable on grass courts. De Gomar in Spain, De Morpurgo in Italy, Kehrling in Hungary, Kozeluh in Czecho-Slovakia, as well as many excellent players in Sweden and Denmark, came to the front.

Germany, owing to her players not having been able to take part in international competition until last year, has passed through a crisis somewhat analogous to that of England.

In France, Laurentz, a brilliant young French player, succumbed in the flower of his youth, and

Wide World

END OF A BACKHAND STROKE (LENGLEN)

Decugis, Germot, Gobert, all of whom had played great tennis, abandoned, one after the other, international contests. Then there appeared Cochet and Borotra, who were soon animated by all that confidence which was the only thing that their predecessors lacked. This they had found in the triumphant example given on all courts by their marvelous fellow-countrywoman, Suzanne Lenglen. Cochet, before Borotra, became champion by winning the tournament of St. Moritz, the World's Championships in Brussels in 1922, then the Barcelona Tournament at the beginning of 1923.

Cochet and Borotra are as different one from the other as possible. Both are wonderful athletes, but the former is never at rest on a tennis court, whilst Cochet, in the most important matches, will allow himself to fall into careless indifference and, of a sudden, bound forward again with wonderful energy. Borotra is remarkably intelligent, as active mentally as physically. He has admirable will power, and, whatever may be the fancifulness with which he adorns his movements on a court and his actions in general, Borotra, much more and much better than is believed, always knows wonderfully well what he wants, and follows without ever deviating from

a line of conduct which he has maturely considered. Cochet is, mentally, what he is physically —indolent, with brilliant flashes of activity. But his unusual temperament or method, whichever it is, bears the stamp of genius, if one may speak of genius in tennis. Cochet is extremely popular; the simplicity of his manner, his self-confidence blended with modesty, his wonderful courage when he struggles on in the most desperate situations—all these qualities make him a player whom the public always likes to watch. Borotra is even more popular than Cochet. If there is anybody on a tennis court whom the crowd delighted to see more than Suzanne Lenglen, it was Jean Borotra. His smile in defeat and in victory, his spontaneousness, his ardor and his courage, his humor, his audacity, make him a player without equal. The crowd likes Cochet because the reactions of Cochet are always simple and natural. The crowd admires Borotra because they see in him the manifestations of the high ideal in sport.

Borotra was at first often beaten by Cochet, but he turned the tide for the first time in January, 1924. A few months later Jean Borotra won the Championship of France, and a month later he inscribed his name on the Roll of Honor

at Wimbledon. It was the first great victory of masculine French tennis. I nearly won it, because at the end of the tournament I was only beaten in the fifth set, but nobody deserved to win at Wimbledon more than the admirable Basque, who thus became the first to follow in the path traced by Suzanne Lenglen. Borotra has now brought his famous "Basque Beret" on the courts of the whole world, across Europe, United States and Canada. Jean Borotra is truly the most wonderful ambassador of all French sport.

It was the destiny of Jacques Brugnon to be the third musketeer. Less athletic than Cochet and Borotra, but very fast, with a wrist of iron, he imparts to the balls extraordinary speed and the most disconcerting twists. Brugnon is modest, has not enough self-confidence. This is so true that in doubles with an audacious partner he becomes marvelous. He is the best and most popular doubles player in France, and the one whom the public, though they do not applaud him as much as Borotra at his best, prefer to any other, owing to the facility and unexpectedness of his play and the elegance and distinction which he always retains on the court.

It is great luck that the best French players

all have different strokes, a personal way of conducting their matches, and different temperaments. This enables all young French players, desirous of finding a model, to choose among Brugnon, Cochet and Borotra the one of which they may become easily a replica more or less exact.

It is marvelous luck that the "three musketeers," as they are so often called, have in their temperaments one point common to all: that of being wonderful sportsmen and perfect friends. This enables them to have a good understanding among themselves and with a fourth among them, whom I will not introduce to you! Firm friendship, feeling of comradeship, which becomes more and more strong, emulation free from all jealousy—these are the best reasons for the victories of the players in the French team. When one of us wins a big tournament, the others are not jealous of him but are stimulated to distinguish themselves in their turn. Nineteen twenty-four was Jean Borotra's year. In 1925, in my turn, I won at St. Cloud and at Wimbledon. Then came Henri Cochet; after a momentary eclipse, he won in an irresistible fashion in the Racing Club in 1926. At Wimbledon Borotra won again, and two months later I found my chance

in America. In 1927 I won at St. Cloud, Cochet at Wimbledon; then Borotra departed to win the Championship of Australia!

Brugnon is not ambitious enough. He does not try hard enough in singles, but wins all the doubles whoever may be the partner he selects! And he is making constant progress in singles.

Suzanne Lenglen, wonderful comrade and friend, is no longer among us. She has become a professional and around her now a curious calm and silence prevail, but none of her comrades who saw her play and struggle on all courts for the good name of French sport will ever forget what tennis and what we owe to her!

CHAPTER XX

TILDEN

UNLIKE Suzanne Lenglen, Tilden, according to those who knew him when he began to play tennis, did not seem at first destined to become a remarkable player. He was for a long time a middling beginner, and it took him nearly ten years of hard work to become a real champion. When Suzanne Lenglen had beaten Mrs. Lambert Chambers at Wimbledon she was immediately admitted to be the best player in the world. On the contrary, though Tilden won, in 1921, the Championships of France, England and America, it was several years before he was admitted to be the best player of his time, and perhaps of all times. Tilden was not, like Suzanne Lenglen, absolutely invincible. He rarely crushed, like Suzanne Lenglen, a series of opponents, but from 1920 to 1926 Tilden was not beaten in any important match, and this, when one thinks of the number of excellent players that he met, is an extraordinary performance. It was at St. Cloud, on the same day that I saw

Suzanne Lenglen beat Mrs. Mallory, that I saw for the first time Tilden, playing an exhibition match against Manual Alonso. I admired exceedingly the speed, elegance and ardor of the wonderful Spanish player, but was amazed by the sight of Tilden's play. It is an extraordinary thing that Tilden, who only became a champion by dint of hard work, shows on the tennis court such facility. Tilden always seems to have a thousand means of putting the ball away from his opponent's reach. He seems to exercise a strange fascination over his opponent as well as the spectators. Tilden, even when beaten, always leaves an impression on the public mind that he was superior to the victor. All the spectators seem to think he can win when he likes. Seemingly, in two steps Tilden covers the whole of the court; without any effort he executes the most various and extraordinary strokes. He seems capable of returning any shot when he likes, to put the ball out of the reach of his opponent when he thinks the moment has come to do so. Sometimes he gives the ball prodigious velocity, sometimes he caresses it, and guides it to a corner of the court whither nobody but himself would have thought of directing it. One would not say that Tilden is very popular, or at all events he is not

so in the same way as Borotra, who, if he does not play for the gallery finds still the best part of his inspiration in the encouragement of the spectators. Tilden does not concern himself at all about the public. He does not seek the approval of the public, but the satisfaction of his own mind. When he refuses the benefit of a mistake of the referee, or when he complains of some injustice, he never worries about what the public thinks of his attitude. Tilden never leaves the public indifferent. One feels that he plays tennis with an inspiration which nothing will cause him to abandon. There is always much applause when Tilden plays, and if they do not applaud him they cheer his opponent on purpose. I have often seen, in the immense arena of Forest Hills, thousands of spectators having come with the idea of systematically encouraging the opponent which Tilden would meet that day. One day Tilden met Richards in the Championship of America. Ten thousand persons were applauding Richards, but only a few cheered Tilden. Tilden did not seem at all affected, did not make a gesture, nor smile in order to win the sympathy of the public, but played so wonderfully that at the end of the match all the spectators, standing up, were applauding him.

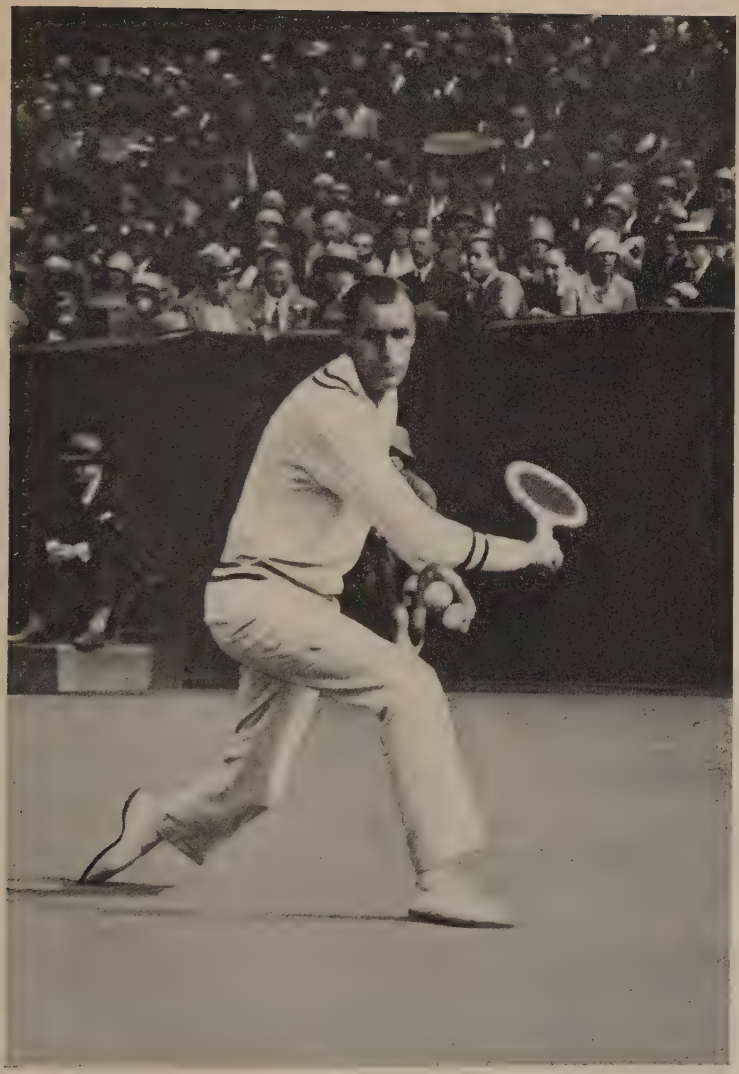


Photo Rol

BACKHAND STROKE (TILDEN)

Tilden desires something more than merely to amuse the spectators, or to win their sympathy by his attitudes. He is determined to compel admiration by the quality of his play and by his personality alone.

It may be said that for quite a long time Tilden was not popular on the court. His unbroken list of victories became monotonous. But the day was to come when he had to face defeat, and he did so, magnificently. Then, and only then, was he able to taste the sweetness of popularity. He had shown that he was not only a great player but a great loser. As great as Suzanne Lenglen through his victories, Tilden became greater when faced by defeat. When Tilden was beaten at Wimbledon and at St. Cloud he did not show any of that nervous petulance which he showed and with which he was reproached when he was always winning. He did not search for any excuses, but referred to the quality of his opponent's play. His bearing in his hour of defeat set a wonderful example and compelled the admiration of all. The Tilden of 1928 is more popular and greater than ever he was in the days when he was undefeatable.

Like Suzanne Lenglen, it was not in his native land that Tilden won his first great victory. It

was at Wimbledon, but a year later. In May, 1920, he left New York as the second player in an American team, in which he was accompanied by Johnston, Williams and Garland. Finding inspiration which had hitherto failed him, Tilden inscribed the first American name on the records of the All-England Club by being victorious over Patterson in the challenge round. The American team for the Davis Cup triumphed easily over the English and French teams, and Tilden with his companions soon sailed for Australia. Notwithstanding the efforts of Patterson and Norman Brookes, the American team was victorious over the Australian in the Davis Cup, and Tilden returned to U.S.A. laden with honors.

Tilden returned to Europe in 1921, won at St. Cloud, defended with success his title at Wimbledon, and became Champion of the United States for the sixth time in succession. The American Davis Cup team beat successively, until 1927, the Australian, Japanese and French teams who tried to take away from them the precious Davis Cup. For seven years, thanks to Tilden, Johnston, Williams and Richards, America maintained her position as the strongest nation in the world.

William Johnston was, with Tilden, the great architect of American victories. Only beaten in America by Tilden, he won easily at St. Cloud and Wimbledon in 1923, and until 1926 was only beaten once by a foreign player (Anderson). In the opinion of many people Johnston was a better player than Tilden. If possible, his execution was more perfect and he was able, with limited physical advantages, to impart greater speed to the ball than his great rival. He generally beat such players as Shimidzu, Kumagae, Patterson, Richards, Borotra and myself much more decisively than Tilden could. But every time he found himself in the presence of Tilden, Johnston appeared to be dominated by the athletic superiority and the strong personality of his rival. Johnston executed perhaps more perfect strokes than Tilden. He did not give the same impression of a master as Tilden, nor did he seem capable of triumphing over any opponent, in any circumstances, like the wonderful Philadelphian.

Few players on all courts had been so unanimously applauded as "Billy" Johnston. No figure was more popular in America. No player ever realized better than he the English ideal of a sportsman; no American player was more ap-

plauded at St. Cloud than he. He beat me regularly in a terrible manner several times, but always after the game I forgot the lesson that he had just given me when he said quite simply: "Bad luck. You were not in form to-day!"

Dick Williams was one of the most popular players in America. He had more personality than Johnston, but much less than Tilden. He does not run on a court as much as Borotra, but he executes without any effort strokes nearly as extraordinary as those of our national Basque champion. In 1914 Williams used to play well in singles, but badly in doubles. After the war Williams became an admirable player in doubles, won at Wimbledon with Garland, and the Championship of America with Vincent Richards. They formed a team invincible for several years.

Vincent Richards, at the time when he became a professional, was regarded as the legitimate successor to Tilden in America. His execution was not perfect; his physical advantages were not comparable to those of Tilden, but, like Cochet, he had an unusual sense of the right stroke to play. He won the Olympic Games in Paris, 1924, but was beaten at Wimbledon by Borotra, and in 1926 he failed twice in Paris and London,

meeting Cochet, who was at his best. He was nearly always beaten pretty easily by Johnston, but defended himself very well when he met Tilden. A wonderful volleyer, he was admirable in doubles.

In 1925 France beat Australia by three matches to one, but was completely crushed in the challenge round by the holders, who won all five matches. This victory appeared to indicate a brilliant future for American tennis.

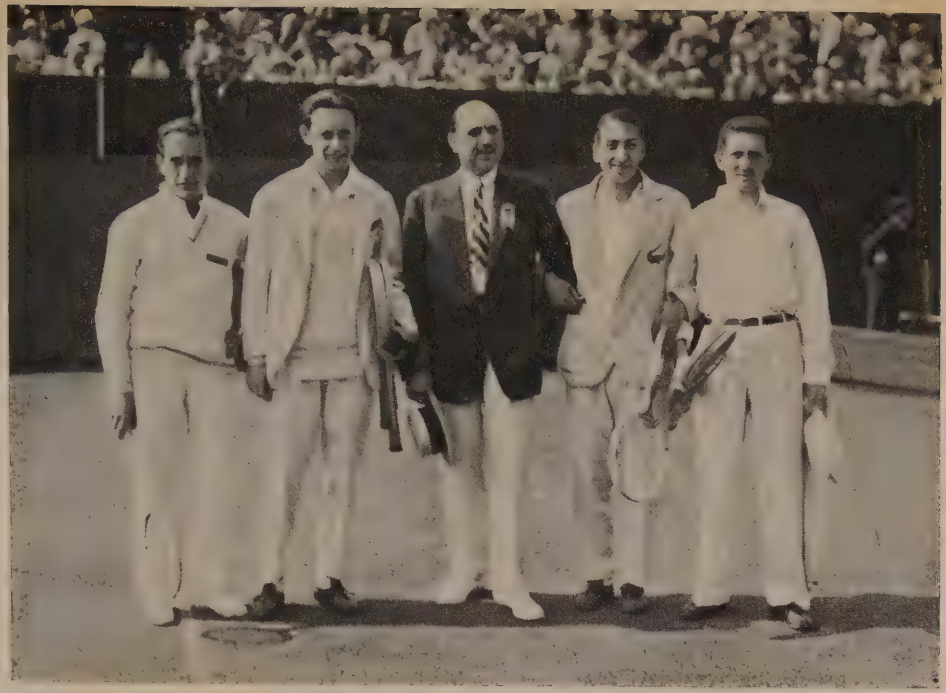
However, although in America the glory of Tilden, combined with the successes of other American players, secured for tennis an extraordinary vogue throughout the world, and especially in Europe, thousands of players were training and progressing with their eyes fixed on the American group. I think that the numerous matches in which they played enabled the best players of Europe to get greater experience than many of the young American players.

It was in 1923 that the first French tennis team sailed for America. Gobert, Cochet and Borotra failed at Boston against Patterson and O'Hara Wood. As in the previous year, Brugnon and Lacoste were defeated when they met Anderson and Hawkes, but little by little "the three musketeers," traveling from May to September and

meeting the most diverse opponents, were gaining an ever greater experience.

In 1924 another defeat was suffered at the hands of the Australians. In 1925 J. Borotra struck his best form, beat Anderson and Patterson in singles, and France won the doubles match. But we were now up against the last barrier and the strongest, the United States. During the winter 1925-26, having determined to play as often as possible against the Americans, "the three musketeers" were again in New York, on covered courts. Tilden and Richards won the team match for America, but two Frenchmen met in the final of the Covered Courts Championship of America.

In the spring of 1926 Richards came to Europe, but could not win anywhere. Then came the American season. We beat with difficulty the Japanese, and on the first day of the Franco-American match Johnston and Tilden defeated Lacoste and Borotra, respectively, and the doubles match was lost. On the third day Tilden was beaten by Lacoste; this was his first defeat in an important match since 1920. Then followed the Championship of America; Cochet beat Tilden, Borotra beat Richards and Johnston, and the final of the National Singles, for the first time



Wide World

THE FRENCH DAVIS CUP TEAM

HENRI COCHET, JEAN BOROTRA, PIERRE GILLON, RENÉ LACOSTE, JACQUES BRUGNON

in the history of tennis, was played between two Frenchmen, Lacoste defeating Borotra.

The Davis Cup remained in America. Tilden and Johnston no longer appeared to us invincible, but the shadow of their glory seemed still to shelter the celebrated cup and put it beyond the reach of all our efforts.

CHAPTER XXI

THE DAVIS CUP

At the beginning of July, 1927, when we had beaten the South African players at Eastbourne, thus winning the European zone of the Davis Cup, it was decided that we should sail as soon as possible for the United States. Our previous journeys had taught us the difficulties of becoming acclimatized to the conditions under which American contests are carried on; the climate, the food, the balls, the courts, the atmosphere of the matches in general are so many changed factors and calculated to render difficult the task of a European player. Each year previously we commenced to play badly in the United States, but little by little, as we became more acclimatized, we met with more success. Profiting by experience, Cochet, Brugnon and myself sailed on the 27th July. This was two weeks earlier than in 1926, so that we had reason to hope that an extra fifteen days' training would enable us to play better when our serious tennis started.

On the boat which was carrying us, between a sky and a sea equally blue, we argonauts were wandering in search of the elusive Davis Cup, the modern Golden Fleece. Our thoughts went back to the innumerable matches played in Dublin, Rome, Copenhagen, Budapest, Eastbourne, Prague, Barcelona and Vienna, each a stepping-stone on the path to win the European eliminating contest for the Davis Cup. We recalled our emotions when Switzerland was leading by two matches to one, at Bordeaux; how little we were pleased when the referee of the Franco-Italian contest announced two matches all. We recalled a thousand amusing incidents in our journeys and in the clubs, in the places where we had played; the aspects of the various towns which had so delighted us. We thought of our past struggles in America (already a long time previously), when we had sailed as novices towards an unknown New York, and when, having beaten the Australians and the Japanese, we came to meet the American giants.

St. Cloud, played only two months previously, was fresh in our memories, and Wimbledon too, only a month before. Tilden was no longer invincible; he had been beaten, but after terrific struggles. It was impossible for us not to admit

that but for some bad luck he might have won twice instead of losing. When we shall meet him in Philadelphia before his own public, on the courts where he learnt to play tennis, shall we beat him in this battle for the Davis Cup, as we had beaten him in his efforts to win an individual title? Tilden was so great in his defeats that he loomed up as a formidable obstacle between us and victory.

Was there not Johnston, also, standing across our path? He perhaps does not give such a great impression as Tilden, but who is harder to beat, who, without any respite, is able to attack from the first ball to the last, who has never been beaten by Lacoste, and whom Cochet has never met. Then there is the doubles match, that unknown factor! Who is going to play for America? The great Johnston-Tilden team, or perhaps Tilden-Williams or Tilden-Hunter? And who will comprise the French team? We certainly feel that we have a chance. We feel that now it is stronger, greater than ever, but we know that it depends on imponderable trifles which cannot be foreseen or controlled. When a Tilden or a Johnston meets a Cochet or a Borotra the result of the match may depend on the heat, on the condition of the court, on the physical condition, a

shade better in one than the other. The match depends also on the greater will to win, and that spirit gives us some hope. At Wimbledon we saw Tilden lose because his nerve unaccountably failed. Tilden has played far too much in Europe. Everywhere he left a little of his will to win. While we are sailing quietly towards America, a radio message informs us that Tilden has just won his third consecutive tournament since his return home. Perhaps at Philadelphia he will be in wonderful form, but it is possible also that he will not be able to will to win.

As soon as we arrived in New York we started for Southampton to commence our training. Southampton is a wonderful place, and our reception surpassed that of any other place in the world. But we find it is not very easy to play tennis well at Southampton. Brugnon was crushed by Tilden, Lott inflicted on me a severe defeat, Cochet probably only escaped defeat because he did not play in singles. We returned to New York to meet Pierre Gillou, our captain. Pierre Gillou is the soul of the French team. He knows all of us well. He knows how to impart confidence to Cochet, to stimulate Borotra, and to cheer us up and put hope into us in our darkest hours.

After spending eight days in New York in training ourselves with scrupulous care we played much better. We departed in order to play at Boston against the Japanese, who had just beaten the Canadians. At Boston, before the match, it rained for three days. It was impossible to train. We recalled our match against the same Japanese the previous year at New York, when the rain also prevented us from training, and we very nearly lost. Fortunately the French team, which was joined by M. and Mme. Washer, was completed by the arrival of Jean Borotra. We formed a regular colony, good humor prevailed, and we were in wonderful spirits.

I played the first match of the contest against Harada with great care, because Harada plays much like Johnston and because I was anxious to try new tactics which I could use against Johnston, fifteen days later. I was naturally anxious, also, to wipe out the memory of my defeat the previous year. Cochet won his match easily. The doubles match was also won with facility. The last two matches were canceled on account of the rain.

We then played, still at Boston, the Doubles Championship and the Mixed Doubles Championship. This was a disaster. Cochet and

Brugnon were beaten by the American "hopes," Lott and Doeg, and Borotra and I were simply crushed by Hennessey and Williams. It was raining nearly every day. Borotra was quite unable to train; finally he practiced on covered courts, but the result was not brilliant. When he played again in the open air he was no longer able to smash! The mixed doubles were a kind of revenge for us. The four French players were in the semi-finals. Unfortunately, the finals were not played until Monday afternoon, and it was not until the evening of the same day that we started for Philadelphia, in order to try to perfect our game on the same courts on which the matches for the Davis Cup would be played.

Tilden seemed in wonderful condition. Hunter also played very well. On the other hand, we began to hope that Johnston, just arrived from the West, on the first day of the Doubles Championship would not play this year as well as in previous years. We were practically certain as to who would play in the singles: Cochet and Lacoste for France, Tilden and Johnston for America. But the doubles teams would only be fixed at the last moment.

Wallace Myers, who had been selected for drawing lots, asked me jokingly on the eve of

the match in what order I should prefer to have them played. I replied to him that, having been beaten two years running by Johnston, I had trained especially to take my revenge, and that I was very anxious to meet him on the first day. Besides, Tilden having to fight a hard game against Cochet on the first day, winning or losing, and playing probably the doubles on the second day, would be less able on the third day to resist the method I would employ against him, of holding out to the end; that is, if I had the good luck of prolonging the match.

Wallace Myers had a lucky hand. At half-past two on Thursday, the 7th, I entered the court to play the first match against Johnston. From the beginning of the match I attacked with all my strength and was fortunate enough to find in front of me an opponent who was never able to recover his wind nor the control of his strokes.* At half-past three Cochet and Tilden, in their turn, entered the court, around which were from twelve to thirteen thousand persons in immense grandstands. Cochet played one of the greatest matches of his life. At first he stayed too much at the back of the court, but at the end of the match he ventured sometimes, on the contrary, to

* Lacoste won 6-3, 6-2, 6-2.

the net, behind rather short attacks. Tilden that day played so wonderfully that it is doubtful if any other player in the world could have defeated him. In the middle of the fourth set Cochet, for a moment, seemed about to win, but Tilden overcame the temporary period of weakness. Perhaps the effort he had to make at that moment may have decided two days later the fate of the Davis Cup. *

That Thursday evening was not a triumphal one, but it was full of encouragement. Everything led us to suppose that Cochet would beat Johnston in the last singles match, and we had still two other cards to play when one only was sufficient. We had two fresh men to play in the doubles and the card furnished by the opponents showed a Tilden exhausted by two strenuous and nerve-racking matches.

Borotra and Brugnon began well and won the first set six to three. Brugnon served well and executed some admirable returns. The volleys of our two players, those of Borotra especially, were fast and deep, and the few smashes that Borotra had to execute were decisive. But from the beginning of the second set Tilden and Hunter concentrated on Brugnon, and, by alternating

* Tilden won 6-4, 2-6, 6-4, 8-6.

lobs and plunging drives, often put him in difficulties. He lost his service and the set, which went to the Americans by six games to three. The third set terminated in the defeat of the French pair, Brugnon losing two services and Borotra one. After the usual rest the fourth set was won magnificently by Borotra and Brugnon, but Tilden was irresistible all through the fifth set, and, well supported by Hunter, scored the match for the United States.

On the evening of that day, there was a banquet at the Germantown Cricket Club. So great was the impression made by Tilden in the doubles that the Americans loudly expressed their certainty of retaining the Davis Cup. In the French camp we felt that Cochet ought to beat Johnston and that Lacoste could beat Tilden, but in spite of everything we could not persuade ourselves that we were going to win. We remembered certainly the defeats of Tilden at St. Cloud and at Wimbledon. Despite all this, however, he was a player whom one does not with impunity regard as anything less than a dangerous obstacle in the way of victory. We felt the magnetism which emanated from his personality, which compels the admiration of crowds and duly impresses his opponents. But the Tarpeian

Rock is near the Capitol. At Philadelphia Tilden could not be beaten by any one player; he was beaten by a team. Cochet compelled him on Thursday to exhaust his physical powers, Borotra and Brugnon obliged him on Friday to work like a Trojan, and on Saturday Lacoste undoubtedly benefited by this attrition.

Tilden attacked with all his strength in the first set, but his "aces" could not compensate for his many mistakes. In the second set he adjusted his attack better, led five to two, and Lacoste was not able to come back. In the third set Tilden had to slow down his attack and accept the play of his opponent: he was beaten three sets to one.* On leaving the court, the crowd bestowed generous applause on the winner. There would have been a wonderful scene had Tilden won. Tilden took his defeat like a great sportsman, whilst the umpiring and attitude of the public were, during the match, above all praise.

But the result created a sensational atmosphere. The match was now two all. A silence like that of death falls over the multitude. The managers and American officials were perturbed. A wild desire surged in our hearts when Cochet

* Lacoste won 6-4, 4-6, 6-3, 6-2.

and Johnston enter the court to play the fifth and last match for the Davis Cup. Generally I have the reputation of being calm, but I was so nervous during this match that I was compelled, in the warm sunlight, to put on a couple of sweaters and an overcoat! Tilden and myself sat side by side. We tried to joke, but did not succeed very well. We were looking at the match, and how can it be a joke when, according to the score, one wants to laugh and the other to cry. Cochet and Johnston, in spite of the nervousness of the public and their own tense feelings, played a magnificent game. Cochet won, without too much trouble, the first and third sets, but lost the second to Johnston, who for the moment seemed again the great Johnston of unlimited courage and resource. After an interval for rest, Cochet got quickly in action, and led five games to two. He had the match several times at his mercy, on his service, but could not finish it off. Johnston, encouraged by thirteen thousand persons, won his service in four "aces" and led by 30-love, but Cochet succeeded in recovering his calm, stalled off the Johnston bid for recovery and administered the final coup that brought the Davis Cup to France.*

* Cochet won 6-4, 4-6, 6-2, 6-4.

Photo Rol

THE DAVIS CUP

Photo Rol

THE DAVIS CUP LEAVING NEW YORK

Victory! A simple word. So short—and yet how expressive. The end of an effort begun in 1922: so many matches played in all the countries of the world, so many endless thousands of miles traveled over, so many hopes, shattered as soon as formed and to-day finally realized. The Atlantic crossed and recrossed seven times. Months and months passed in dreaming of this day! And at last it had come.

Mme. Cochet fainted; Pierre Gillou sprang up like a child; I took off my overcoat and sweaters; Brugnon dropped his pipe; and Borotra—you can imagine him justifying his reputation of "The Bounding Basque." Everything after that seemed like a dream. The Davis Cup delivered to our team; a thousand photographs, uniting the players with the French Ambassador and American Minister for War, Dwight Davis, the giver of the Cup. The memories of it all seem like a phantasy.

We returned to New York: congratulations, telegrams, telephone calls, interviews, autograph hunters and invitations!!!

Then we played for the Championship of America, which I had the good fortune to win, and so brought back the National Cup with the Davis Cup. A wonderful return home, official

receptions, l'Elysee and . . . calm. I cannot write it all. It is too confusing—too wonderful.

Brugnon, Borotra and Boussus are now playing in Australia; Cochet is at Cannes. I have, for the time being, given up tennis, and am resting. We play over again in our minds last summer's matches, smile when the image of the Davis Cup comes before our eyes, and begin to think of how best we shall defend it.

When I think of the terrible struggles I have had, and the national and even international importance attached to tennis, it seems almost absurd that all this can arise out of hitting a little ball over a net with more or less force and precision.

Tennis is only a sport; sport is only a pastime, as I am aware. Nevertheless, I know that when it is necessary to defend the Davis Cup I shall play with more pleasure and courage than ever.

After all, what is the importance of the aim if the effort is worth while in itself and carries in itself its own reward. Tennis is only a game, but it is a game that is worth playing.

RULES OF LAWN TENNIS

AND

CASES AND DECISIONS

(Reprinted by courtesy of the United States Lawn Tennis Association.)

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The appended Code of Rules, revised to date, is the Official Code of the International Lawn Tennis Federation, of which the United States Lawn Tennis Association is a member.

The Cases and Decisions, the Glossary of Terms and the Tournament Regulations are addenda adopted by the United States Lawn Tennis Association and are official in the United States only, although they in no way conflict with the Code or international practice.

The Explanations while *not official* utterances may be considered a correct guide for interpreting the Rules. They have been prepared by the Tennis Umpires Association to amplify and explain the formal Code.

THE SINGLES GAME

RULE 1

Singles Court; Dimensions and Equipment.

The *Court* shall be a rectangle 78 feet long and 27 feet wide. It shall be divided across the middle by a net, suspended from a cord or metal cable of a maximum diameter of one-third of an inch, the ends of which shall be attached to, or pass over, the tops of two posts, 3 feet 6 inches high, which shall stand 3 feet outside the court on each side. The height of the net shall be 3 feet at the center, where it shall be held down taut by a strap not more than 2 inches wide. There shall be a band covering the cord or metal cable and the top of the net for not

The Net.

RULE 1. less than 2 inches nor more than 2½ inches in depth on each side. The lines bounding the ends and sides of the court shall respectively be called the *Base Lines* and the *Side Lines*. On each side of the net, at a distance of 21 feet from it and parallel with it, shall be drawn the *Service Lines*. The space on each side of the net between the service line and the side lines shall be divided into two equal parts called the *Service Courts* by the *Center Service Line*, which must be 2 inches in width, drawn half-way between, and parallel with, the side lines. Each base line shall be bisected by an imaginary continuation of the center service line to a line 4 inches in length and 2 inches in width called the *Center Mark*, drawn inside the court and at right angles to and in contact with such base line. All other lines shall be not less than 1 inch nor more than 2 inches in width, except the base lines, which may be 4 inches in width, and all measurements shall be made to the outside of the lines.

Base Lines.
Side Lines.
Service Lines.
Service Courts.
Center Service Line.
Center Mark.
Width of Lines.

Space Behind Base Line in International Matches.

NOTE—In the case of the International Lawn Tennis Championship (Davis Cup) or other official championships of the International Federation, there shall be a space behind each base line of not less than 21 feet, and at the sides of not less than 12 feet.

Explanation of Rule 1.

The posts in singles should be 3 feet outside the singles court, and in doubles 3 feet outside the doubles court.

RULE 1.

The net should be 33 feet wide for a singles court, and 42 feet wide for a doubles court. It should touch the ground along its entire length and come flush to the posts at all points.

It is well to have a stick 3 feet 6 inches long, with a notch cut in at the 3-foot mark, for the purpose of measuring the height of the net at the posts and in the center. These measurements, as well as the measurements of the court itself, always should be made before starting to play an important match.

RULE 2

Permanent Fixtures.

The permanent fixtures of the court shall include not only the nets, posts, cord or metal cable, strap and band, but also, where there are any such, the back and side stops, the stands, fixed or movable seats and chairs round the court, and their occupants, all other fixtures around and above the court, and the Umpire, Foot Fault Judge and Linesmen when in their respective places.

RULE 3

The Ball: Size, Weight and Bound.

The outer surface of the ball shall be smooth and without stitches. The ball shall be more than $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter and less than $2\frac{5}{8}$ inches in diameter, and more than 2 ounces and less than $2\frac{1}{16}$ ounces in weight. It shall have a bound of more than 53 inches and less than 58 inches when dropped 100 inches at a temperature approximating to 68 degrees Fahrenheit, upon a concrete base, and a deformation of more than .290 of an inch and less than .315 of an inch when subjected to a pressure of 18 pounds applied to each end of any diameter

RULE 3. at a temperature approximating to 68 degrees Fahrenheit. All tests for deformation shall be carried out in accordance with the instructions contained in the Appendix hereto.

CASE I. Should a ball become broken through hitting, shall a let be called?

Decision. Yes.

Explanation of Rule 3.

"How often may the players have new balls?" is a question that is frequently asked.

According to Tournament Regulation 14 (g) the Umpire, subject to the approval of the Referee, may decide when new balls are required to insure fairness of playing conditions. In matches where there is no Umpire, the players should agree beforehand on this matter.

RULE 4

Server and Receiver.

The players shall stand on opposite sides of the net; the player who first delivers the ball shall be called the *Server,* and the other the *Receiver.*

CASE II. A player returns the ball, and finding that he cannot stop himself before reaching the net, jumps over it. Is it a good return?

Decision. No. Rule 4 requires that the players shall be on opposite sides of the net, and therefore the player invading his opponent's court loses the stroke.

CASE III. The Server claims that the Receiver must stand in the court. Is this necessary?

Decision. No. The Receiver may stand wherever he pleases on his own side of the net.

CASE IV. A cuts the ball just over the net and it returns to A's side. B, unable to reach the ball, throws his racket and hits the ball. Both racket and ball fall over the net on A's court.

A returns the ball outside of B's court. Who wins the point?

Decision. When B threw his racket across the net he invaded his opponent's territory and such an invasion was in a measure responsible for A's returning the ball out of court; in other words, B would lose the point.

Case V. A player in returning the ball, which has been played just over the net with a heavy cut so that it bounces sharply to one side and backward, runs outside the court, and, while the ball is still in play, passes the imaginary line which would be made by the extension of the net. Technically, he is not on his side of the net, and Rule 4 states that players shall be on opposite sides of the net. Does he lose the point?

(*a*) If he strikes the ball before stepping across the imaginary line which would be made by the extension of the net?

(*b*) If he strikes the ball after stepping across the imaginary line?

Decision. He does not lose the point in either case, unless he actually gets in his opponent's way and hinders his return.

RULE 5

Choice of Sides and Service.

The choice of sides and the right to be Server or Receiver in the first game shall be decided by toss. If the winner of the toss choose the right to be Server or Receiver, his opponent shall have the choice of sides. If the winner of the toss takes the choice of sides, his opponent shall have the right to be Server or Receiver. The winner of the toss may, if he prefer it, require his opponent to make the first choice.

Explanation of Rule 5.

The toss is usually made by one player twirling a racket in the air, the other calling "Rough"

RULE 5. or "Smooth"; which means that the fine stringing (the trimming) at the head of the racket will have the rough or the smooth side up when the racket falls to the ground.

RULE 6

How Service is Delivered.

The service shall be delivered in the following manner: Immediately before commencing to serve, the Server shall stand with both feet at rest behind (*i.e.*, further from the net than) the base line, and within the imaginary continuation of the center mark and side line. The Server shall then project the ball by hand into the air in any direction and strike it with his racket, and the delivery shall be deemed to have been completed at the moment of the impact of the racket and the ball. A player with the use of only one arm may utilize his racket for the projection.

CASE VI. Is it allowable in singles for the Server to stand behind the base line back of the alley?

Decision. No.

CASE VII. May a player serve underhand?

Decision. Yes. There is no restriction regarding the kind of service which may be used; that is, the player may use an underhand or an overhand service at his discretion.

RULE 7

Foot Fault Rule.

The Server shall throughout the delivery of the Service—

(*a*) Not change his position by walking or running.

(*b*) Maintain contact with the ground.

(*c*) Keep both feet behind (*i.e.*, further from the net than) the base line. RULE 7.

NOTE—Under Rule 7 (*b*) both feet must *not* be off the ground at the same time.

Explanation of Rule 7.

Foot means all that portion of the leg below the ankle.

A player may shift either foot as long as both feet are kept behind the base line and both feet are not off the ground when the ball is struck. The Server must not take a walking or running start, but slight movements of either foot shall not be construed as a walk or run.

RULE 8

In delivering the service, the Server shall stand alternately behind the right and left courts, beginning from the right in every game. The ball served shall pass over the net and hit the ground within the service court which is diagonally opposite, or upon any line bounding such court, before the Receiver returns it. *Service Delivered from Alternate Courts.*

Explanation of Rule 8.

In the absence of a Linesman and Umpire, it is customary for the Receiver to determine whether the service is good or not.

It should be remembered, in handicap matches, that the Server starts to serve from the right-hand court no matter whether odds be given or owed.

RULE 9

The service is a *Fault* (*a*) if the Server commit any breach of Rules 6, 7 or 8, (*b*) if he miss the ball in attempting to strike it, *Faults.*

RULE 9. (*c*) if the ball served touch a permanent fixture (other than the net, strap or band) before it hits the ground.

CASE VIII. After throwing the ball up preparatory to serving, the Server decides not to strike at it and catches it instead. Is it a fault?

Decision. No. He has not touched the ball "in attempting to strike it." The fact that he catches the ball shows that he has no longer any intention of delivering a service.

RULE 10

Where Ball is Served After a Fault.

After a fault (if it be the first fault) the Server shall serve again from behind the same half of the court from which he served that fault, unless it was a fault because he served from behind the wrong half, when he shall be entitled to deliver one service from behind the other half.

A fault may not be claimed after the next service has been delivered.

CASE IX. A player serves from the wrong court; he loses the point, and then claims it was a fault.

Decision. The point stands as played.

CASE X. The point score being 15-all, the Server by mistake serves from the left court; he wins the point and serves again, delivering a fault; the mistake is then discovered. Is he entitled to the previous point? From which court should he serve next?

Decision. The previous point stands. The next service should be from the left court, the score being 30-15 and the Server has served one fault.

Explanation of Rule 10.

A service from the wrong court is a fault if

RULE 10.

discovered before the point is completed. If play on that point has been completed, the stroke stands as played whether the Server has won or lost. In either case, as soon as the mistake is discovered the Server must deliver his next serve from the proper court. All previous points before such discovery shall be scored as played. However, if the mistake of the Server was due to the incorrect calling of the score by the Umpire, the stroke should be declared a let and played over unless the point has been completed. The player should not suffer from the Umpire's error. (Case XXVI.)

RULE 11

Ball Not to be Served till Receiver is Ready.

The Server shall not serve until the Receiver is ready. If the latter attempt to return the service, he shall be deemed ready. If, however, the Receiver signify that he is not ready, he may not claim a fault because the ball does not hit the ground within the limits fixed for the service.

CASE XI. The service is delivered before the Receiver is ready. He tries to return it and fails. Is he entitled to have it played over again?

Decision. No. If he attempts to return the service, he is deemed ready.

CASE XII. In receiving the service, a second ball was served while the first one (a let) was still in the air, and the two came in contact. No attempt was made to return the second service. The point was scored for the Server. Was this correct?

Decision. No. A let should be called.

CASE XIII. The Receiver calls "Not ready" for a second service. The ball strikes beyond the service line, and the Receiver claims that the fact that he was not ready makes no difference, since a fault cannot be returned, and, therefore, that two faults have been served.

RULE 11. *Decision.* The second service is a let. A player may not call "Not ready" and then have the service count, or not, as suits his interest.

Explanation of Rule 11.

The Server must wait until the Receiver is ready for the second service as well as the first, and if the Receiver claims to be not ready and does not make any effort to return a service, the Server may not claim the point, even though the service was good.

RULE 12

A Let. The service is a *Let* (*a*) if the ball served touch the net, strap or band, provided the same be otherwise good, (*b*) if a service or fault be delivered when the Receiver is not ready (see Rule 11). In case of a let, the service counts for nothing, and the Server shall serve again, but a let does not annul a previous fault.

Explanation of Rule 12.

During the service, a ball that touches the net in going into the proper court is termed a let and counts for nothing, another service being delivered. If the ball touches the net when going into the proper court during a rally, it is good.

There is no limit to the number of let balls that may be made on the service, and the Server continues serving in the same court until a good service is delivered or two faults are made.

RULE 13

When Receiver Becomes Server. At the end of the first game the Receiver shall become Server, and the Server Receiver; and so on alternately in all the subsequent games of a match. If a player serve out of turn, the player who ought to have

served shall serve as soon as the mistake is discovered. All points scored before such discovery shall be reckoned, but a single fault served before such discovery shall not be reckoned. If a game shall have been completed before such discovery, the order of service shall remain as altered. RULE 13.

RULE 14

A ball is in play from the moment at which it is delivered in service (unless a fault or a let), and remains in play till the point is decided. *Ball in Play Till Point is Decided.*

CASE XIV. A ball is played into the net; the player on the other side, thinking that the ball is coming over, strikes at it and hits the net. Who loses the point?

Decision. If the player touched the net while the ball was still in play, he loses the point. A ball touching the net ceases to be in play as soon as it is clear that the ball unimpeded will not cross the net.

RULE 15

The Server wins the point (*a*) if the ball served touch the Receiver or anything which he wears or carries before it hits the ground, (*b*) if the Receiver otherwise lose the point as provided by Rule 17. *When Server Wins Point.*

RULE 16

The Receiver wins the point (*a*) if the Server serve two consecutive faults, (*b*) if the Server otherwise lose the point as provided by Rule 17. *When Receiver Wins Point.*

RULE 17

When Player Loses Point.

A player loses the point if—

(*a*) He fail, before the ball in play has hit the ground twice consecutively, to return it directly over the net (except as provided in Rule 20 *c*); or

(*b*) He return the ball in play so that it hits the ground, a permanent fixture, or other object, outside any of the lines which bound his opponent's court; or

(*c*) He volley the ball and fail to make a good return even when standing outside the court; or

(*d*) He touch or strike the ball in play with his racket more than once in making a stroke; or

(*e*) He or his racket (in his hand or otherwise) or anything which he wears or carries, touch the net, posts, cord or metal cable, strap or band, or the ground within his opponent's court at any time while the ball is in play; or

(*f*) He volley the ball before it has passed the net; or

(*g*) The ball in play touch him or anything that he wears or carries, except his racket in his hand or hands; or

(*h*) If he throws his racket at and hits the ball.

RULE 17.

CASE XV. A player standing outside the court volleys the ball or catches it in his hand, and claims the stroke because the ball was certainly going out of court.

Decision. He loses the point. It makes no difference where he was standing. The return is presumed good until it strikes the ground outside of the court or a permanent fixture other than the net or posts.

CASE XVI. A player is struck by the ball served before it has touched the ground, he being outside of service court. How does it count?

Decision. The player struck loses the point. The service is presumably good until it strikes in the wrong court or out of court. A player must not take the decision upon himself by stopping the ball.

CASE XVII. In delivering a first service which falls outside the proper court, a player's racket slips out of his hand and flies into the net. Does he lose the point for hitting the net?

Decision. No; it counts merely as one fault whether the racket strikes the net before or after the ball falls outside.

CASE XVIII. A singles match is played with a doubles net and inside posts. A player touches the net beyond the inside posts and claims that he does not lose the point because there should be no net more than three feet outside of the court.

Decision. He loses the point. The net, where he touches it, is part of the supports of the net.

RULE 18

Ball Falling on Line is in Court.

A ball falling on a line is regarded as falling in the court bounded by that line.

RULE 19

Ball Touching Permanent Fixture.

If the ball in play touch a permanent fixture (other than the net, posts, cord or metal cable, strap or band) after it has hit

RULE 19. the ground, the player who struck it wins the point; if before it hits the ground, his opponent wins the point.

CASE XIX. A return hits the Umpire, or his chair or stand. The player claims that the ball was going into the court.

Decision. He loses the point.

Explanation of Rule 19.

If a ball before touching the ground strikes the backstop, any of the officials or their chairs, the point is lost by the player who hits the ball. If, however, the ball strikes in the proper court and on the first bound hits any fixture (see Rule 2), the point is lost by the player receiving the ball.

RULE 20

A Good Return. It is a good return—

(*a*) If the ball touch the net, posts, cord or metal cable, strap or band, provided that it passes over any of them and hits the ground within the court;

(*b*) If the ball, served or returned, hit the ground within the proper court and rebound or be blown back over the net, and the player whose turn it is to strike reach over the net and play the ball, provided that neither he nor any part of his clothes or racket touch the net, posts, cord or metal cable, strap or band or the ground within his opponent's court, and that the stroke be otherwise good;

(*c*) If the ball be returned outside the

post, either above or below the level of the top of the net, even though it touch the post, provided that it hits the ground within the proper court;

(*d*) If a player's racket pass over the net after he has returned the ball, provided the ball pass the net before being played and be properly returned;

(*e*) If a player succeed in returning the ball, served or in play, which strikes a ball lying in the court.

CASE XX. Is it a good return if a player return the ball holding the racket in both hands?

Decision. Yes.

CASE XXI. The service or the ball in play strikes a ball lying in the court. May it be returned?

Decision. Yes, if it is clear to the Umpire that the right ball is returned.

CASE XXII. A ball going out of court hits a net post and bounds into the opposite court. Is it a good return?

Decision. Yes.

Explanation of Rule 20.

Should the ball touch a player while it is in play, no matter if the player is standing in or out of the court, he loses the point, and it should be remembered that a ball is good until it strikes the ground outside of the court. Should the player's racket touch the net, the posts or any part of them, or if he steps into his opponent's court, or drops his racket into his opponent's court while the ball is still in play, he loses the point. If his racket strikes the ball before it comes over the net into his court, he loses the point. He may, however, strike the ball while it

RULE 20. is in his court and permit his racket to follow the ball across the net without losing the point.

A ball hit with a sharp cut that bounds back over the net after having struck in the proper court is good. The player may reach over the net to return such a ball, but loses the point if he touches the net in doing so.

An officially recognized decision has been rendered that makes any support of the net—the posts, the guy-ropes, or the center strap—a part of the net itself, and any ball hitting one of the supports and still striking the proper court is considered a good return (except on the service). The posts are required to stand outside of the court, and yet a ball being returned at a sharp angle from outside might well be going in and still touch one of the posts.

A return that passes between the net post and the net but below the top cord of the net is not a good return, because the net should fit flush to the net posts. The purpose of the net is to serve as a barrier, from post to post, between the players.

RULE 21

Interference. **In case a player is hindered in making a stroke by anything not within his control, except a permanent fixture of the court, the point shall be replayed.**

CASE XXIII. A spectator gets into the way of a player who fails to return the ball. May the player then claim a let?

Decision. Yes; if in the Umpire's opinion he was obstructed by a circumstance beyond his control. For instance, if the ropes or the seats are allowed to be so near to the court that a player is interfered with by them, the point should not be played again, because the ropes and seats form part of the arrangements of the ground. If, however, a spectator passes in front of those seats, or places a chair nearer than the original line, and so interferes with a player, the point should be played again.

CASE XXIV. A player is interfered with as above, and the Umpire directs the stroke to be played again. The Server had previously served a fault. Has he the right to two services?

Decision. No. The fault stands. A let does not annul a previous fault.

CASE XXV. The Umpire or a Linesman calls "Out," and then instantly changes and says "Play." The player fails to return the ball, and claims he was prevented by the Umpire.

Decision. The Umpire shall call a let, unless it is clear to him that the mistaken call was not in any way the cause of the player's failure to return the ball, in which case the point stands. In the case of a clear service ace, pass or placement, the point should not be replayed. Of course, where the final decision of the Linesman is "Out," a let should not be called in any case, but the player who struck the ball loses the point.

CASE XXVI. During play a ball is thrown or comes into court and interferes with the return by the player in that court. What shall be done?

Decision. A let shall be called. But this shall apply only when the ball comes into court during play. It is the duty of the Receiver to remove loose balls from his court or to have them removed. If he fails to do so he must take the consequences.

CASE XXVII. The first ball served—a fault—strikes the backstop and returns, interfering with the Receiver at the time of the second service. May he claim a let?

Decision. Yes; but if he had an opportunity to remove the ball from the court, and negligently failed to do so, he may not claim a let.

CASE XXVIII. During the play the Umpire calls "Let"; one of the players continues the point, wins it, and appeals to the Referee, who decided that the Umpire was in error as a matter of law in declaring a let. The player claims the point.

RULE 21. *Decision.* It is a let, unless the Umpire's erroneous call had no effect on the play.

Explanation of Rule 21.

If a player, while the ball is in play, is interfered with by the gallery, by a ball coming into the court or by any disturbance not within his control, a let shall be called.

The Umpire is the judge of outside interference with the play, but in the case of a match played without officials, it is both courteous and customary to allow the player who is interfered with to decide.

RULE 22

Scoring. If a player wins his first point, the score is called 15 for that player; on winning his second point, the score is called 30 for that player; on winning his third point, the score is called 40 for that player; and the fourth point won by a player is scored *Game* for that player, except as follows:

Game.

Deuce. *Advantage.* If both players have won three points, the score is called *Deuce;* and the next point won by a player is scored *Advantage* for that player. If the same player wins the next point, he wins the game; if the other player wins the next point, the score is again called *Deuce;* and so on, until a player wins the two points immediately following the score at deuce, when the game is scored for that player.

Explanation of Rule 22.

This method of scoring is the one used in all matches except when a handicap match is played under Tournament Regulation 23.

RULE 23

How Winner of Set is Decided.

The player who first wins six games wins a set, except as follows:

If both players have won five games, the score is called *Games-All,* and the next game won by a player is scored *Advantage Game* for that player. If the same player wins the next game, he wins the *Set;* if the other player wins the next game, the score is again called *Games-All;* and so on until a player wins two games more than his opponent, when the set is scored for that player.

RULE 24

When Players Change Sides.

The player shall change sides at the end of the first, third and every subsequent alternate game of each set, and at the end of each set, unless the total number of games in such set be even, in which case the change is not made until the end of the first game of the next set.

Explanation of Rule 24.

The change of courts is made after every *odd* game of each *set.* If the total number of games played in a set is even, play the first game of the next set in the same court in which the preceding set was finished; then change, play two games and change again, and so on.

If the number of games in a set is odd, change sides at the end of the set, play one game and change again.

Each set is considered as a separate unit.

It is the Umpire's duty to direct the competitors to change sides, in accordance with this law (Regulation 14 (e) of Tournament Regulations).

RULE 25

Maximum Number of Sets.

The maximum number of sets in a match shall be five, or, where women take part, three.

RULE 26

Rules Apply to Both Sexes.

Except where otherwise stated, every reference in these Rules to the masculine includes the feminine gender.

RULE 27

Umpire's Decision Final; Referee Decides Questions of Law.

In matches where an Umpire is appointed, his decision shall be final; but where a Referee is appointed, an appeal shall lie to him from the decision of an Umpire on a question of law, and in all such cases the decision of the Referee shall be final.

Referee May Postpone Match.

The Referee, in his discretion, may at any time postpone a match on account of darkness or the condition of the ground or the weather. In any case of postponement the previous score and the previous occupancy of courts shall hold good, unless the Referee and the players unanimously agree otherwise.

Explanation of Rule 27.

The Referee postpones the match or approves of such action on the part of the Umpire. (Tournament Regulations 10 and 14 (g).)

In case of a postponement the match is resumed from the point, game and set score existing when the match was stopped, *unless* the Referee and both players unanimously agree to play the entire match, or any part of it, over.

RULE 28

Play Shall Be Continuous: Exceptions.

Play shall be continuous from the first service till the match be concluded; provided that after the third set, or when women take part, the second set, either player is entitled to a rest, which shall not exceed ten minutes,* and provided further that when necessitated by circumstances not within the control of the players, the Umpire may suspend play for such a period as he may consider necessary. These provisions shall be strictly construed, and play shall never be suspended for the purpose of allowing a player to recover his strength or his wind. The Umpire shall be the sole judge of intentional delay, and after giving due warning he may disqualify the offender.

Explanation of Rule 28.

The ten minutes' rest may be taken *only after the third set* in men's events. It may not be taken before the third set or at any time after the fourth set has been started. It must be taken after the third set or not at all.

In women's matches, *after the second set or not at all.*

In boys' (under 15 years of age) matches a ten minute rest *must* be taken after the second set.

There is no rest in a two-out-of-three-set match in men's events.

The players must be back on the court ten minutes after play has ceased.

Should a player, on account of physical unfit-

* Provided that any Nation is at liberty to modify this proviso, or omit it from its regulations governing tournaments, matches or competitions held in its own country, other than the International Lawn Tennis Championship (Davis Cup).

RULE 28. ness or an unavoidable accident not within his control, be unable to continue play, he must be defaulted.

"Stalling" is one of the hardest things to deal with. The rules say that "play shall be continuous." An Umpire should determine whether the "stalling" is deliberate and for the purpose of gaining time. If he decides that it is, he should warn the player to stop his unfair practice; if this does not end it, he should then default him.

The Umpire has the power to suspend a match for such period as he may think necessary, if, in his judgment, the play is interfered with by circumstances beyond the players' control. Such circumstances might be the passing of an airplane, moving of spectators in the stands, etc.

THE DOUBLES GAME

RULE 29

The foregoing rules shall apply to the *Doubles Game* except as follows:

RULE 30

Dimensions of Court for Doubles Game.

For the doubles game, the court shall be 36 feet in width, *i.e.*, 4½ feet wider on each side than the court for the singles game, and those portions of the singles side lines which lie between the two service lines shall be called the *Service Side Lines*. In other respects the court shall be similar to that described in Rule 1, but the portions of the singles side lines between the base line and the service line on each side of the net may be omitted if desired.

Service Side Lines.

CASE XXIX. In doubles the Server claims the right to stand at the corner of the court as marked by the doubles side line. Is the fore-

going correct or is it necessary that the Server stand within the limits of the center mark and the singles side line?

Decision. The Server has the right to stand anywhere between the center mark and the doubles side lines.

RULE 31

First Server in Doubles Match.

The pair who have the right to serve in the first game of each set may decide which partner shall do so, and the opposing pair may decide similarly for the second game.

Partners Serve in Alternate Games.

The partner of the player who served in the first game shall serve in the third; the partner of the player who served in the second game shall serve in the fourth, and so on in the same order in all the subsequent games of a set.

Order of Service Not Changed During Set.

The order of service having been arranged may not be altered during the set, but it may be changed at the beginning of each new set. Similarly, the receivers may not change places with each other for the purpose of receiving the service before the end of a set, but they may do so at the beginning of a new set.

CASE XXX. In doubles, one player does not appear in time to play, and his partner claims to be allowed to play single-handed against the opposing pair. May he do so?

Decision. No.

Explanation of Rule 31.

At the start of any new set a pair may change the order of service from that followed in the preceding set. This order may not be changed during a set.

RULE 31. It is optional with them which shall serve first, but they must serve alternately throughout each set.

RULE 32

Ball Touching Server's Partner is a Fault.

The service is a fault as provided for by Rule 9, or if the ball served touch the Server's partner or anything which he wears or carries; but if the ball served touch the partner of the Receiver or anything which he wears or carries, before it hits the ground, the Server wins the point.

RULE 33

Procedure When Player Serves Out of Turn.

If a partner serve out of his turn, the partner who ought to have served shall serve as soon as the mistake is discovered, but all points scored, and any fault served before such discovery, shall be reckoned. If a game shall have been completed before such discovery, the order of service remains as altered.

Explanation of Rule 33.

A point or game that has been played out and finished stands, even though the wrong partner has served. The match goes on as though no error had been committed, the partner who did not serve out of turn serving next.

RULE 34

Partners Receive Service Alternately.

The players to receive the service shall receive it alternately throughout each game. The order thus established shall not be altered during the set.

CASE XXXI. Is it allowable, in doubles, for a partner of the Server to stand in the center of

the service court, and thereby obstruct the view of the Receiver?

Decision. Yes. The partner may take any position in the court that he wishes.

Explanation of Rule 34.

The receiving formation of a doubles team may not be changed during a set; only at the start of a new set. Partners must receive throughout each set on the same sides of the court which they originally select when the set begins. The first Server is not required to receive in the right court; he may select either side, but must hold this to the end of the set.

RULE 35

Ball Must be Struck Alternately By One or Other of Opposing Teams.

The ball shall be struck alternately by one or other player of the opposing pairs, and if a player touches the ball in play with his racket in contravention of this Rule, his opponents win the point.

CASE XXXII. In doubles a ball is struck at by a player at the net, and also by his partner, both players missing the ball, which drops outside the court. Neither player called "Out." Who wins the point?

Decision. The point goes to the players who struck at the ball and missed it. An unsuccessful attempt to hit the ball, or calling "Out," has no bearing on the case.

Should any point arise upon which you find it difficult to give a decision or on which you are in doubt as to the proper ruling, immediately write, giving full details, to the Tennis Umpires Association, care of U.S.L.T.A., 120 Broadway, New York City, and full instructions and explanations will be sent you.

GV
995
.L23

Lacoste, Jean René.
Lacoste on tennis

796.34 L11

PIEDMONT COLLEGE LIBRARY
GV995 .L23
Lacoste, Jean R / Lacoste on tennis.
GE7A
10085678